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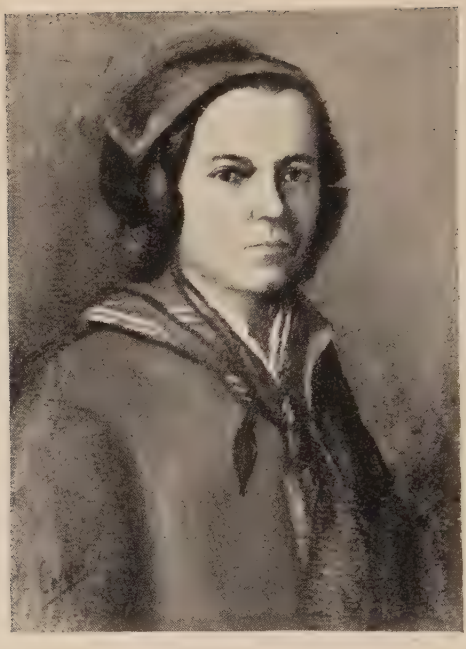
JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU



From a Portrait of Rousseau at Sixteen

Now in the salon of Les Charmettes. It has this inscription, "Rousseau adolescent."

(Portrait présumé ayant toujours existé dans la maison de Jean François Favre, avocat d'Annecy, décédé le 7 mars 1855.)

[*Frontispiece* (1).

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

A NEW CRITICISM

BY

FREDERIKA MACDONALD

AUTHOR OF
'ILIAD OF THE EAST,' 'THE FLOWER AND THE SPIRIT,'
'STUDIES IN THE FRANCE OF VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU,' ETC.

'Il a déploré, expié, racheté ses fautes. Il a cherché le vrai, adoré le bien; proclamé le droit; souffert pour la justice. Il a beaucoup entrepris et beaucoup suscité . . . la seconde moitié de sa vie a été dévoué aux plus grandes causes. Qu'on lui maintienne sa place dans le prytanée des mortels glorieux; et qu'on lui rouvre la porte de cette enceinte, qui a pour inscription: 'Aux grands ouvriers de l'histoire la posterité reconnaissante.'—Amiel.

'J'ai parlé pour le bien des hommes:—pour une si grande cause qui refuserait jamais de souffrir?'—Jean Jacques Rousseau.

'Jamais les discours d'un homme qu'on croit parler contre sa pensée ne toucheront ceux qui ont cette opinion. Tous ceux qui, pensant mal de moi, disent avoir profité dans la vertu par la lecture de mes livres, mentent, et même très-sottement. Ce sont ceux-là qui sont vraiment des Tartufes.'—J. J. Rousseau, *Third Dialogue*.

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WATERFALL NEAR LES CHARMETTES. (Called after J. J. Rousseau.)
See *Confessions*, Part I. liv. iv. for Rousseau's description of it.

(A better image of a life that brought refreshment to an arid age than the stagnant Pool,
"affreux, sombre et dormant,
où des reptiles noirs fourmillent vaguement.")

[*Frontispiece* (2).

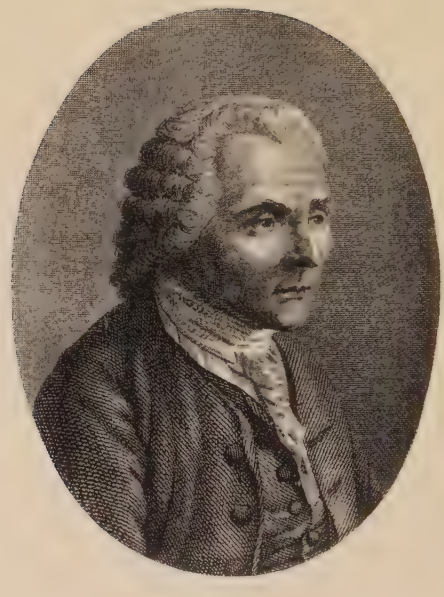
TO

MY HUSBAND JOHN MACDONALD

I dedicate

THIS WORK, WHICH REPRESENTS TWENTY YEARS

OF RESEARCH



J. J. Rousseau at Sixty

"Toutes ces passions se peignaient successivement sur son visage suivant que les sujets de la conversation affectaient son âme ; mais dans une situation calme sa figure conservait une empreinte de toutes ces affections, et offrait à la fois je ne sais quoi d'aimable, de fin, de touchant, de digne, de pitié, et de respect."—Bernardin de Saint Pierre.

[*Frontispiece* (3).

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JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU
A NEW CRITICISM

INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEW CRITICISM

What is the purpose of this new criticism of J. J. Rousseau? And at this time of day, what is my excuse for supposing that it can interest modern readers?

The purpose is to establish by newly-discovered historical evidence a fact which, presented as a theory, has been pronounced too improbable to deserve serious consideration—the fact, viz. that, as the result of a conspiracy between two men of letters, who were his contemporaries, an entirely false reputation of Rousseau has been handed down to us. Condemned by the voice of public opinion in his own day, and by the decision of the best minds in the generation after his own, this false reputation gained acceptance in an epoch when the last of Rousseau's contemporaries had disappeared. And it now serves as the foundation of the accepted doctrine of his repulsive personality, adopted by his best known French and English biographers.

But if even the fact be as I have stated it, does it constitute a valid excuse for this new criticism? At the commencement of the twentieth century, have not all discussions about Rousseau's personality become profoundly indifferent to us? The author of the

Contrat Social and of *Emile*, if he survive at all, lives in his books. And the worth, or worthlessness of these books, tried by their competency to meet modern spiritual needs, remains the same, whether the man who wrote them had, in his generation, a virtuous or a repulsive character.

When replying to these objections, I shall not attempt to impose my own conviction upon my readers. I will merely state it, and find my valid excuse on less debatable grounds. To me, then, it seems that the personal character of a great writer who in a momentous epoch was a leader of souls, can never be indifferent to us. Such a writer, in so far as he has helped to form the mind that lives in us, is, as Emerson has finely said, "More ourselves than we are." When he falls short morally, our ideal interests suffer. And what is best in us, what is "more ourselves than we are," gains power, when the fame of such a leader of souls is cleansed from unjust reproach.

But, in this case, as I have said, I may leave my own convictions out of the argument. I can find a sufficient excuse and reason for a new criticism of Rousseau in the actual conditions of modern opinions about the man and about his books.

These conditions do not show that Rousseau's personality has ceased to interest modern critics; or that people read the *Contrat Social* and *Emile* to-day with disinterested forgetfulness of all theories about the private character of the man who wrote them.

What these conditions of opinion *do* show is, that Rousseau's personality is made extremely interesting to psychological and pathological critics, by the theory that a writer whose distinction was "depth and fervour of the moral sentiment, bringing with it the indefinable gift of touching many hearts with love of virtue and the things of the spirit"[1] was himself a moral *crétin*. This theory renders Rousseau's personality valuable to

[1] See *Life of Rousseau* by Mr. John Morley, vol. i. p. 3, 4.

supporters of the doctrine (essentially modern, as everyone will admit) that a corrupt tree brings forth the choicest fruit, and that only a hair divides genius from insanity. It also determines the method of criticizing the author of the *Contrat Social* by psychological, instead of by historical methods. And that this theory of his personality serves as the foundation of the criticism of Rousseau's life and doctrines accepted as authoritative by the vast majority of English readers at the present hour, is proved by the verse of Victor Hugo's which Mr. John Morley prints on his title page, as an appropriate text and clue to his study of Rousseau.

"Comme dans les étangs, assoupis sous les bois
Dans plus d'une âme, on voit deux choses à la fois :
Le ciel, qui teint les eaux, à peine remuées,
Avec tous ses rayons, et toutes ses nuées;
Et la vase, fond morne, affreux, sombre, et dormant,
Où des reptiles noirs, fourmillent vaguement."[1]

In other words, the starting-point, and *raison d'être*, of the accepted method of criticizing Rousseau is the extraordinary problem his genius and his repulsive personality are supposed to offer psychologists. And if this problem have no existence, if there were no reptiles swarming in Rousseau's under-nature, then this criticism is unsatisfactory; because a method that starts with wrong assumptions will not reach right conclusions.

On the other hand, with regard to the study of his books, and a just and clear understanding of his doctrines and influences, these conditions of modern opinion show that the theory of his abominable private life, and detestable personal character, leads to

"As in still pools, beneath the forest green,
In many a soul, two things at once are seen:
The sky reflected, beauteous to behold,
In sunlit radiance, and clouds touch'd with gold,—
And sullen depths, of stagnant water, sleeping
Where, swarming in black slime, reptiles are vaguely creeping."
(*Free translation.*)

the neglect of his works by people formed to derive profit from them; earnest and sincere minds, who do not count it worth while to weigh seriously the social theories, or the philosophy of life, of a moral *crétin*. And further, they show that this theory leads also to a special criticism of his books as well as of his life by psychological biographers, who seek in them, not the author's openly-expressed ideas and convictions, but the underlying fallacies, veiled sophistries, and extravagant absurdities of an unbalanced mind, constantly, so it is assumed, in contradiction with itself. And these subtle interpretations of books that, read as they are written, present no contradictions or difficulties, create confusion in the minds of readers incessantly warned that they must not accept the statements made as a plain exposition of the author's convictions;[1] and as a final result do leave "in a cloud of blank incomprehensibleness" the teachings, as well as the personality, of one of the most lucid as well as one of the most eloquent of writers.

So that, accepting the proposition that Rousseau survives to-day in his books, and that our chief concern is with the serviceableness, or unserviceableness, of his social doctrines and philosophy of life, my contention is that a new criticism of him is required, where the first step must be the revision of the doctrine that he was a moral *crétin*, because, as it stands, this doctrine, when it does not lead to the complete neglect of his works, lends authority to a false method of criticizing them.

But, I shall again be asked, in view of the adverse judgment pronounced upon Rousseau by his best known French and English biographers, Saint-Marc Girardin and Mr. John Morley, and of the authoritative opinion expressed by such distinguished men of letters as Sainte-Beuve, E. Scherer, M. Maurice Tourneux, and

[1] See Morley's *Rousseau*, vol. ii.: Criticism on the *Contrat Social*, pp. 127, 143, 155, 180, 195.—See Appendix, Note A.

their modern continuators in this field of criticism, is there not something that savours of presumption in my effort to re-open a question these eminent judges pronounce settled? "*Rousseau's repulsive and equivocal personality has deservedly*"—so Mr. John Morley affirms—"*fared ill in the esteem of the saner and more rational of those who have judged him.*"[1] How can I suppose that any fresh arguments I may bring will disturb the confidence felt by modern readers in the conclusions reached by these authorities?

Here, too, I have to make my own position plain.

I do not expect, nor ask, that any arguments or impressions of mine should be weighed against the impressions and arguments of the many accomplished literary critics in whose esteem Rousseau's personality has (deservedly or undeservedly) fared extremely ill. My contention is that whereas this question has been decided heretofore by arguments, it is one that can only be finally settled by historical evidence. And my claim is that, as a result of the discovery and comparative study of previously unexplored documents, I am able to bring to its final solution incontrovertible proofs that the doctrine of Rousseau's private life and personal character accepted by his leading French and English critics at the present hour, has for its foundation an audacious historical fraud.

To establish a claim of this sort, I must of course prove the authenticity and importance of the documentary evidence that puts out of court the most subtle arguments. But first of all, in connection with the weight attributed to these arguments, it is necessary to establish also that, even taking the question as it stands, the situation is *not* correctly summed up in Mr. John Morley's sentence.

For who are the most sane and rational judges in this particular case? If by this phrase he intended the best informed and most competent of Rousseau's

[1] *Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 5.

critics, ought we to look for them amongst modern men of letters who, by their own admission, have not made it their task to obtain a precise knowledge of facts that have become ghostly to them, a puzzle that can now never be found out, or (in their estimation) be worth finding out?[1] Should we not rather seek these most sane and rational judges amongst critics equally distinguished by mental superiority, who judged contradictory assertions and facts in dispute, in the light of their own recollections and of the testimony of still living witnesses?

Accepting this position, we must not allow the authoritative tone adopted by some modern upholders of the doctrine that there were two men in Rousseau—an eloquent writer "with the gift of touching many hearts with love of virtue and the things of the spirit," and a man whose vile character "made his life a scandal to others and a misery to himself"[1]—to conceal from us the fact that there exists an exactly opposite doctrine to this—viz. that Rousseau's private life was an example, in an artificial age, of sincerity, independence, simplicity, and disinterested devotion to great principles; and that his virtuous character and impressive personality lent authority to his writings.

Nor between these two doctrines can we accept as correct the assumption that the first theory (of Rousseau's double nature) is held by all patient students of his life, and that the second theory (of his virtuous character as the source of his genius) is held only by "fanatics." So far is this from being true that, if we take the trouble of separating into two classes the different critics by whom "Jean Jacques" (as Carlyle expressed it) "was alternately deified and cast to the dogs," we shall find all students of the facts in the first class, amongst admirers of Rousseau; and all fanatics, in the sense of the despisers of evidence and the holders

[1] Morley's *Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 278.
[2] *Rousseau*, vol. ii. p. 300.

fast by a faith they refuse to verify, amongst the casters of Jean Jacques to the dogs.

The first step in our historical inquiry must then be to establish the actual conditions of the question, before our own new criticism commences. And to this end, let us examine how much truth belongs to the assumption that the doctrine of Rousseau's detestable private character is supported (1) by the verdict passed upon him by his contemporaries, (2) by the decision of his best informed and most competent critics, (3) by the judgment passed upon his *Confessions* by the best minds in an epoch when the events and personages dealt with were still kept in remembrance; and when the book was tried by the literary and moral standards of the time when it was written.

PART I

THE ACTUAL CONDITIONS OF THE QUESTION

(BEFORE MY NEW CRITICISM COMMENCED)

TWO THEORIES

1. That Rousseau's Disinterested Life and Virtuous Character lent Authority to his Writings.

2. That His Vile Outer Life and Repulsive Personality Leave the Social Prophet in a "Cloud of Black Incomprehensibleness" unless he be Criticized by Psychological Methods.

"All the faculties of his mind, his morals, his writings, bear the stamp of his character. There was never a man so consistently true to his principles as Rousseau."—Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.

"Why not admit once and for all that there were two men in Rousseau—the writer, the thinker to whom every one does justice; and then the man, whose frightful character is undeniable."—L. Perey and Gaston Maugras.

The first theory has the support of the verdict passed upon Rousseau by his contemporaries, and of the best minds who judged him in the generation after his own.

The second theory is accepted by modern critics, who base their judgment on the testimony of Madame d'Epinay in her *Memoirs*, and of Grimm in the Literary Correspondence.

THE FIRST THEORY

"Le vertueux Citoyen de Génève"

CHAPTER I

THE VERDICT PRONOUNCED UPON J. J. ROUSSEAU'S CASE BY HIS CONTEMPORARIES

WHAT was the judgment passed upon J. J. Rousseau's personal character by the voice of public opinion in his own day; and by spectators of his daily life, and listeners to his familiar conversation, who have reported, without prejudice or favour, the impression he made upon them?

The popular judgment pronounced upon him stands recorded in a most unmistakable manner in all contemporary documents that did not owe their origin to his personal enemies, the Encyclopædists. Thus, in the same infallible way that, in these documents, the phrase "this great man," "*ce grand homme*," follows the name of Voltaire, the term "virtuous," "*le vertueux*," precedes the name of Jean Jacques Rousseau.

But the public who described him as "the virtuous citizen of Geneva," "the virtuous Jean Jacques," "the virtuous Rousseau," it will be said, knew him through his writings. What was the opinion of those impartial witnesses amongst his contemporaries who enjoyed the best opportunities of studying his personal tastes, temper, and habits, in his daily life?

To decide this question, and to discover whether the impartial testimony of his contemporaries confirms the doctrine of his repulsive and equivocal personality, we must not follow the example of writers who, like the

authors of those two widely-read volumes *La Jeunesse* and *Les Dernières Années de Madame d'Epinay*, look for this contemporary judgment amongst the very men whom the author of the *Confessions* accused as associates in a plot to create for him an entirely false reputation.

Thus MM. Lucien Perey and Gaston Maugras, when they have quoted Sainte-Beuve, Saint-Marc Girardin, and E. Scherer, as modern supporters of the theory that the author of the *Contrat Social* was a "liar," an "impostor," and the base "calumniator of benefactors who had overwhelmed him with touching kindnesses," conclude in this fashion:—

"Here, then, we have the judgment pronounced by three masters in modern criticism, upon the disputed case between Rousseau and his benefactress.[1] *To obtain its confirmation by contemporaries we might quote a thousand passages from Voltaire, from Diderot, from d'Alembert, from Hume, from Tronchin* which would testify to our impartiality, for we have been accused of too much indulgence for Madame d'Epinay and Grimm; and of a prejudice against Rousseau. But after the authorities we have quoted, it does seem to us that a time has come when one might make an end of this eternal discussion about Rousseau. Why not admit, once for all, that there were two men in him: the writer, the thinker, to whom every one renders justice—and the private man whose frightful character one cannot but recognize?"

The selection of contemporary witnesses made by MM. Perey and Maugras does not testify to their impartiality. It convicts them of the singularly unjust method of instituting as judges in this case Rousseau's private enemies—in other words, the very men who, taken together, represent one of the parties to the suit.

But if we reject the evidence of Rousseau's so-called "old friends," who (as a result, it is alleged, of his bad behaviour to them) became later on his accusers and

[1] Madame d'Epinay.

enemies, do we not deprive ourselves of the testimony of precisely those contemporaries who knew him best, and who had enjoyed opportunities possessed by no one else of observing his daily life?

Here is an assumption often taken for granted, but it is one that investigation shows to be entirely unsound.

The name of Rousseau's "old friends," generally adopted by Rousseau's calumniators, belonged at the most to three persons amongst them—to Madame d'Epinay, Diderot and Grimm. Madame d'Epinay's friendship for Rousseau lasted ten years, and it will later on be established that her judgment voluntarily pronounced upon her old friend Jean Jacques was not the one found to-day in her *Memoirs*. Diderot's friendship for Rousseau commenced in 1741, and for eleven years of the seventeen that passed before their open quarrel, he showed himself sincerely attached to the man he afterwards denounced as a monster and an artificial scoundrel. This intimacy of eleven years is not honourable to Diderot, if the man he made his chosen companion deserved the epithets bestowed upon him. As for Grimm's claim to speak with authority about Rousseau's faults in the character of an "old friend," this "old" friendship dated from 1749, when Grimm came to Paris as reader in the household of the young hereditary Prince of Saxe Gotha, and when Rousseau, already famous, took the friendless young German by the hand, and introduced him to Diderot, to the Baron d'Holbach, and to Madame d'Epinay. Grimm's friendship towards the man to whom he owed these introductions lasted until he had established his position securely amongst the acquaintances thus given him. In 1754, as a power in the society of the Baron d'Holbach, and the preferred friend of Diderot, he had become superciliously disdainful of Rousseau. In 1756, as the accepted lover of Madame d'Epinay, he had become rancorously antagonistic to her old friend Jean Jacques. By 1758 he had succeeded in alienating from

Rousseau all the friends he had received from him. Here then was Grimm's authority as an interpreter of the true Rousseau.

A number of Rousseau's contemporaries, who had no motive for painting him other than they knew him to be, enjoyed quite as good opportunities as Diderot, Grimm, Madame d'Epinay, and David Hume,[1] for studying him in his daily life; and much better opportunities than were ever possessed by Voltaire, Tronchin, or d'Alembert, or, for that matter, by the Baron d'Holbach, by Marmontel, or by La Harpe, none of whom had ever lived on terms of friendly intimacy with Rousseau. The name of "old friend" belonged much more correctly to Deleyre, who remained constantly attached to Rousseau for twenty-five years; to Dupeyrou, who was on affectionate and confidential terms with him for sixteen years; to the Count d'Eschernay, who was his near neighbour, and the companion of his botanizing excursions during his residence at Motiers Travers; to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, whose sympathetic friendship was Rousseau's chief solace during the eight years of his last residence in Paris; to Corancez, who by his own statement "saw Rousseau constantly and without interruption, during the last ten years of his life." All these writers have left full and detailed accounts of the impression he made upon them; and of his personal tastes, habits, temper and character.[2] Comparing these separate portraits together, we find they all agree in attributing to the Rousseau they knew not a repulsive, but a singularly lovable, and, at the same time, an impressive, personality, distinguished by the very qualities one would expect to discover in the author of his works—simplicity and nobility, affectionateness, and an amiable readiness to enter into and enjoy the small pleasures of

[1] Hume, as a matter of fact, was only on speaking terms with Rousseau for three months, from December 1765 to March 1766.

[2] See Appendix, Note A A, vol. i. p. 304.

life, and to sympathize with and share the interests of all sorts and manners of men and women, upon the condition that they approached him with frankness and confidence; but with these gentle qualities, some sterner ones—impatience of routine and of conventional restraints, and of any endeavour to bring him under their yoke; and, especially, uncompromising severity for all forms, and amongst them more than any other, for the benevolent form, of deceit.[1]

But what about the opposite picture of him, given by the Encyclopædists? Are we free to reject as a gratuitous libel, the portrait of Jean Jacques painted by Grimm, by Diderot, and by Madame d'Epinay; where the prophet of sincerity to others appears as an impostor, devoured by insane vanity and love of notoriety; a sophist, who does not wish to enlighten, but merely to dazzle, his readers; an egoist; an ingrate; a morbid misanthrope; and the base calumniator of his benefactors?

We shall be better able to answer this question later on. But, in connection with the verdict passed upon Rousseau by his contemporaries, we are bound to recognize that this portrait of him in the character of an artificial scoundrel, *was never openly published during his life-time, as the acknowledged opinion and account of him given by his "old friends"; but that it was circulated by secret methods, in anonymous pamphlets and in secret manuscript journals, and that the men who carried on these attacks, openly professed to believe Jean Jacques insane because he suspected them of being his hidden persecutors.*

So that this description does *not* represent a contemporary judgment passed upon him. What is more, it does not represent a doctrine that amongst his contemporaries obtained supporters and advocates outside

[1] See Note A A for Rousseau's reply to d'Eschernay: "Sir, I do not like to be deceived even when the intention is to serve me," vol. i. p. 310.

of the immediate circle of the Encyclopædists. And this is the more remarkable when we recollect the exceptional opportunities for secretly sowing libels against their "old friend" Jean Jacques, broadcast, possessed by its two most active promulgators:—by Diderot, who as director of the *Encyclopædia* employed and could command to serve his views, all the pens most active in anonymous journalism throughout France; and by Grimm, who as editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire*, exercised a strong hidden control over opinions in cultivated circles in all the courts of Europe. Notwithstanding the talents and influence of both these men, their known animosity to Rousseau, and the baseness of their methods of attacking him in a way that gave him no chance of defending himself, so discredited their evidence, that the legend of his abominable character, industriously circulated by them, gained no serious belief until the whole generation which had known both the original hero and the originators of the legend, had passed away.

CHAPTER II

THE JUDGMENT PASSED UPON ROUSSEAU IN THE GENERATION AFTER HIS OWN

So much then for the judgment passed upon Rousseau by his contemporaries. We have now to see what was the verdict pronounced upon the case between himself and the Encyclopædists by the best minds in the generation after his own.

There are excellent reasons why, if we really wish to acquaint ourselves with the decision arrived at by the "saner and more rational of those who have judged him," we should look for the authoritative critics of Rousseau in this epoch.

It does not admit of denial that if we recognize an equality of intellectual and critical endowments between judges in this epoch and in our time, the historical position of the earlier judges lends necessarily more authority to their decisions than to those arrived at by men of letters who, at a distance of more than a hundred years from the person and events connected with this case, base their conclusions upon arguments about what is seems most reasonable to suppose true; and not upon a knowledge of facts "become," as Mr. Morley affirms, "ghostly to us."

Looking back to judges for whom the true facts of Rousseau's life, and of the behaviour towards him of his enemies, had *not* become ghostly, I shall not be accused of depreciating the intellectual rank of the three masters of modern criticism quoted by MM. Perey and Maugras, if I class with them four earlier master critics, whose historical position gave them advantages not possessed by Sainte-Beuve, by Saint-Marc Girardin, by E. Scherer,

or by Mr. John Morley; and whose decision, consequently, in this particular case, must be recognized as having greater authority. These representative critics, whose unanimous opinion, arrived at from different standpoints, may surely be described as the sentence upon Rousseau pronounced by "the saner and more rational of those who have judged him," are Mirabeau, the politician of genius; Madame de Staël, the accomplished woman of the world as well as of letters; Emanuel Kant, the philosophic critic; and Schiller, the ideal poet.

Mirabeau's judgment. Before acquainting ourselves with Mirabeau's estimate of the personal character of the author of the *Contrat Social*, let us see what circumstances lend more authority to his decision than belongs to the convictions and impressions of a literary critic who, like Sainte-Beuve, gives it as his "opinion" that the author of the *Confessions* was a liar.

Gabriel Honoré Mirabeau was born in 1749; in other words, he entered life in the same year when, at thirty-seven years of age, the author of the *Discourse upon the Influences upon Morality of the Arts and Sciences* commenced his career as a social prophet. Gabriel Honoré was ten years of age, and old enough and bright enough, we may be sure, to attend to the discussions going on amongst his elders, when the publication of the *Lettre à d'Alembert* announced to the public the rupture of Rousseau's intimacy with Diderot. In 1768, when after his quarrel with Hume, Rousseau was offered by the elder Mirabeau (the Friend of Man, but the enemy of his own household) a retreat in one of his chateaux Gabriel Honoré was already an officer in the army; and in the way of hearing all that was said for, and against a famous man on terms of intimate correspondence with his terrible father. In 1778, the date of Rousseau's death, Gabriel Honoré Mirabeau was twenty-nine years of age. His mature judgment upon Rousseau pronounced two years later, was delivered in full view of the savage

ttacks made upon their "old friend" Jean Jacques, by he Encyclopædists, and in the year when the First Part of the *Confessions* was published.

We have Mirabeau's judgment expressed in one of his *Letters to Sophie*—written from his Vincennes prison.

"It was I, my Friend," he wrote, "who taught you irst your enthusiasm for Rousseau: and I shall never egret it. Not for his talents do I envy this extra- ordinary man; but for his virtue—the source of his loquence, the soul of his works! I knew Rousseau ersonally, and amongst my friends are many of those who were intimate with him. He was always the same —full of integrity, of frankness and of simplicity; vithout any sort of conceit or affectation; or any effort o mask his faults, or show off his own merits. One an only forgive those who decry him, by supposing hat they did not know him. Every one is not able to onceive the sublimity of such a soul; and one can only e justly judged by one's peers. Whatever people may ay, or think, of him during another century (the nterval of time envy may give his traducers), there was ever perhaps a man so virtuous; for he continued so, lthough he was persuaded others did not believe in the incerity of his writings and actions. He was virtuous n despite of nature, of man, and of fortune; and lthough all these overwhelmed him with misfortunes, alumnies, sorrows and persecutions; he was virtuous, nough suffering from the most lively sense of injustice nd wrong; he was virtuous, notwithstanding the weak- esses which he has revealed in the *Memoirs of his Life*, —for, endowed by nature with the incorruptible and irtuous soul of an epicurean, he yet observed in his abits the austere morals of a stoic. Whatever bad use ay be made of his own *Confessions*, they will always rove the good faith of a man who spoke as he thought, rote as he spoke, lived as he wrote, and died as he ad lived."

Madame de Staël's judgment. It was in 1789, that

is to say eleven years after Rousseau's death, and year after the publication of the Second Part of th *Confessions*, that Madame de Staël, then twenty year of age, made her literary *début* with her *Letters upo the Confessions*. The young authoress was writing of man who in 1765 had known and warmly sympathize with her mother, then Mademoiselle Curchod, heartlessl treated by Gibbon, who broke off his engagement wit her for reasons of worldly prudence. Later on, Madam de Staël's father, Necker, also became one of Rousseau' correspondents. In other words, the authoress of th *Letters upon the Confessions* had behind her sources o information, in the way of family records, that gav authority to her decided views about Rousseau's sincerity

"Rousseau a hypocrite!" ejaculates Madame d Staël. "No! Throughout his life I find him to hav been a man who spoke, who thought, who wrote, wh acted spontaneously."

And she goes on to institute a comparison betwee Rousseau and Buffon.

"M. de Buffon's imagination," she says, "colours an adorns his style: Rousseau's style is animated by hi character. The first writer carefully chooses his expres sions—the second speaks straight from the heart. finished intellect, and extraordinary talents, could onl produce such eloquence as M. de Buffon's is; but th source of Rousseau's eloquence is passionate sincerity."

Emanuel Kant's judgment. And now for the judg ment of the philosopher. Emanuel Kant was bor twelve years after Rousseau; and he survived hi twenty-six years. The author of the *Criticism of Pu Reason* has acknowledged his intellectual obligations t the author of *Emile* in the most generous terms; an the impression the work made upon him at the firs reading stands recorded in a familiar little anecdote.

In 1763 Kant was principal librarian at Königsber and the unfailing punctuality of his habits was such th the Königsberg town-folk set their clocks by the hou

he Magister Kant took his afternoon walk. One day, owever, Königsberg clocks were thrown into confusion. ts principal librarian failed to appear at the usual our, and the cause of this falling away from perfect unctuality was that Kant had lost count of time when eading *Emile*.

But there was another writer besides Rousseau who, Kant affirms, exercised a strong influence on his develop- ent, and this writer was David Hume. Necessarily, hen, the much talked of quarrel between two famous en, to both of whom he felt himself spiritually related, ust have engaged Kant's attention in 1767. The ncident, however, did not lead him to the conclusion hat there were two persons in Rousseau, the writer and hinker, in whom he maintained, "*intellectual penetration, igour of genius, and sensibility of soul reached a degree f perfection that has perhaps never been equalled in ny time, or amongst any people*," and a man of frightful haracter, an ingrate, an artificial scoundrel, etc. On he contrary, Kant's verdict upon Rousseau was that was the association in him of personal and moral xcellences with intellectual powers, that made the upreme value of his influence.

"The young should be taught to prize intellectual ulture for moral as well as for mental reasons," he rites. "Thus in my own case, I am by mental emperament a seeker after truth; I feel very powerfully he thirst for knowledge and the desire for intellectual rogress. There was a time when I believed this rogress only did honour to humanity; and I despised he people because they cared nothing for all this. ousseau brought me to a truer state of mind. My olish vanity has disappeared. I have learned to honour en, and I should count myself more useless than the ommonest labourer did I not believe that intellectual rogress lends value to every form of human progress and tablishes the rights of man upon a secure foundation."

Schiller's judgment. But it is Schiller's judgment of

Rousseau that will most bewilder people who accept as authoritative the doctrine of his equivocal and repulsive personality, taught by modern critics.

Yet here, too, should it not be realized that in the character of a sane and rational judge between the author of the *Confessions* and his accusers, more weight belongs to the decision of Schiller, who in 1782 stood by Rousseau's grave, in a world still warm with memories of him, and still loud with the voices of those who defamed him, than to the convictions and conclusions of a Sainte-Beuve, who in 1853, or of a Mr. John Morley, who in 1873, decided this case in accordance with preconceived theories of the dispositions and circumstances of the persons concerned?

To Schiller, the argument uttered by Diderot two years earlier: "Too many honest men would have been in the wrong had Jean Jacques been in the right," did not appear convincing. For him, these self-styled honest men had proved themselves, by their own words and actions, the malignant calumniators of the "old friend" whose last years their secret persecutions had embittered. As for Rousseau himself, to this watcher in a place just left vacant of his presence, his vision reappeared, not in the repulsive form of a diseased sensualist, or of a mischievous maniac, or of an atrocious scoundrel, but in the guise of a modern Socrates, a Christ-like soul, teaching Christians true humanity; a lofty spirit and a gentle heart, at once too high and too humble to have found happiness on earth.

VERSES ON THE OCCASION OF A VISIT TO ROUSSEAU'S GRAVE AT ERMENONVILLE, 1782.

(*Free translation*)

"O Monument! putting thine age to shame!
O Record of thy country's endless blame!
O Grave of Rousseau!—Soil that I revere!
Repose and peace, in life, he sought in vain:
Repose from evil men, and peace from pain—
Repose and peace be found; but only—here!

Ah, when shall end old wars against the right?
Once darkness fought with wisdom in the night:
Now wise men die, battling with summer blindness!—
Sophists slew Socrates, professing truth:
Christians stab Rousseau, without thought of ruth,—
Rousseau,—who Christians urged to human kindness.

And who are they who dare to judge this Sage?
Half-finished brains, small minds, devoured with rage,
Under the gaze of Genius, on them turned:—
Pigmies the Giant Rousseau justly hate,
Because his greatness shows their mean estate;
Poor souls, where fire Promethean never burned.

But not for this earth was thy soul designed,
O Rousseau! still by evil men maligned.
O Christ-like Soul—too humble, and too high;
Let the world's madness go the way it will,
Return thou, where angelic spirits still
Summon their Brother, wandered from the sky."

"Monument von unsrer Zeiten Schande,
Ew'ge Schmachschrift deinem Mutterlande
Rousseau's Grab,—gegrüsset seist du mir!
Fried' und Ruh' den Trümmern deines Lebens,
Fried' und Ruhe suchtest du vergebens,
Fried' und Ruhe fandst du hier!

Wann wird doch die alte Wunde narben?
Einst war's finster, und die Weisen starben!
Nun ist's lichter, und der Weise stirbt:
Sokrates ging unter durch Sofisten,
Rousseau leidet, Rousseau fällt durch Christen,
Rousseau, der aus Christen Menschen wirbt.

Und wer sind sie, die den Weisen richten?
Geistesschwache, dir zur Tiefe flüchten,
Vor dem Silberblicke des Genies
Abgesplittert von dem Schöpfungswerke,
Gegen Riesen Rousseau Kind'sche Zwerge,
Denen nie Prometheus Feuer blies.

Nicht für diese Welt warst du—zu bieder,
Warst du ihr zu hoch, vielleicht zu nieder,
Rousseau, noch warst du ein Christ,
Mag der Wahnwitz diese Erde gängeln!
Geh du heim zu deinen Brüdern Engeln
Denen du entlaufen bist."[1]

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[1] Schiller, *Anthologie*, 1788. Edition Heidelberg, 1850.

CHAPTER III

THE JUDGMENT PASSED UPON THE *CONFESSIONS* BY CONTEMPORARY AND BY MODERN CRITICS

THE judgment passed upon the *Confessions* in the epoch when the book was first given to the world, was not the judgment pronounced by modern critics, who try the work by the literary and moral standards of a different age to the one when it was written; and who look back at its author across a century of libels.

It has been seen that for Mirabeau and Madame de Staël, the *Confessions* stood out as the shining proof of Rousseau's sincerity. We shall presently see that this was the general view taken by critics who stood near to the events and personages dealt with; but first of all, in order to judge how the same things may wear an entirely different air to people who look at them from different standpoints, let us hear a modern man of letters, pass judgment upon a work that he admitted he considered it "superfluous" to study with the purpose of testing the author's veracity. In a biographical Essay upon Grimm, E. Scherer incidentally favours his readers with his opinion about the *Confessions*, which he describes as "this gallery of iniquities and extravagances;—*cette galérie de noirceurs et d'extravagances.*"

"I know nothing more revolting than the Second Part of the work,"[1] wrote M. Scherer; "the most odious ingratitude, the most vindictive malice, here are allied with effusions of sensibility and professions of virtue. Everything is base in this man, who believes

[1] The Second Part contains Rousseau's story of his betrayal by his "friends"; as a matter of fact, everything that shocks modern decency is in the First Part of the *Confessions*.

that he atones for disgusting vices by confiding them to the public; that he gets rid of the burthen of gratitude by abusing those who have overwhelmed him with touching kindnesses; and whose favourite companion is the servant girl he makes the mother of children, whom he packs off as they are born to the Foundling Hospital. In vain are we assured that this man was mad, and that his madness was of a kind well known by its peculiar symptoms. We refuse to describe malice, cunning and base suspiciousness, as pathological symptoms. We feel that the soul of this author must always have been base, and we experience a certain pleasure when recognizing that, with all his talent, the writer cannot conceal his native vulgarity. Eloquence he has of a sort, but no true nobility of style. Genius he has also, but genius stripped of the beauty that should adorn it.[1]

"It is superfluous to look for any information upon any subject whatever, in the last books of the *Con-*

[1] E. Scherer has not, in this disparaging view of Rousseau's style, the support of that exquisite littérateur, Sainte-Beuve. Here is what this perfect stylist has to say of one he recognizes, here, as his "Master."

"Je voudrais parler de cette langue du xviiie siècle considérée dans l'écrivain qui lui a fait faire le plus grand progrès, qui lui a fait subir du moins la plus grande révolution, depuis Pascal: une révolution de laquelle nous autres du xixe siècle nous dâtons. Avant Rousseau et depuis Fénélon il y avait eu bien des essais de manière d'écrire qui n'étaient pas celles du pur xviie siècle—Rousseau parut, le jour où il se découvrit tout entier a lui même, il révéla du même coup à son siècle l'écrivain le plus fait pour exprimer avec nouveauté avec vigueur, avec une logique melée de flamme, les idées confuses qui s'agitaient et qui voulaient naître. Depuis Jean Jacques c'est dans la forme de langage établie et créée par lui que nos plus grands écrivains ont jeté leurs propres innovations et qu'ils ont tenté de renchérir . . . . je n'ai pu indiquer qu'en courant dans l'auteur des *Confessions* les grands côtés par lesquels il demeure un Maître—que saluer le créateur de la rêverie, celui qui nous a inoculé le sentiment de la nature et le sens de la réalité, le père de la littérature intime et de la peinture d'intime,—quel dommage que l'orgueil misanthropique s'y mêle; et que des tons cyniques fassent tâches au milieu de tant de beautés charmantes et solides."—*Causeries*, Nov. 1850.

fessions. Resentment here betrays its own cause by the extravagance of its exaggerations."

The last sentence proves that M. Scherer did not himself examine Rousseau's charges, and that he accepted the assertions of the persons who professed to be Jean Jacques' benefactors, because the story told in the *Confessions* appeared to him incredible.

But this was not the view taken by judges who, as observers of the conduct and language of the men denounced in the *Confessions,* were better qualified than modern critics can be to decide whether these persons were Rousseau's benefactors, or his betrayers.

Such an observer was Claude Joseph Dorat, the poet of *Les Baisers.* Dorat was born in 1734. He was, then, thirty-six years of age when he heard Rousseau read his *Confessions* in 1770. Possessed of private means, and untroubled by ambition, Dorat had not, like so many other young men of letters in his day, to seek the patronage, or dread the displeasure, of the powerful sect of the Encyclopædists; and his intimate and independent relations with the leaders of the sect (Diderot, Grimm, and d'Holbach, and with their militant disciples, Marmontel and La Harpe) enabled him to form a free judgment of their characters and sentiments. This personal acquaintanceship with Jean Jacques' professing "old friends" did not lead Dorat to conclude that they were malignantly, or insanely, calumniated, when accused by Rousseau of treacherously using the claims of their old friendship to mask their efforts to injure him. We find, on the contrary, that Dorat accepted these charges with unquestioning confidence in Rousseau's veracity. We find, also, that this refined and over-exquisite poet remained entirely unconscious of the "revolting" character of the *Confessions;* and of the "coarseness, baseness, and vulgarity" that so shock and disgust modern critics. In brief, we find that the same work M. Scherer saw darkly, from a distance, as a "gallery of iniquities," stood out, in the sight of a

critic who judged it by the moral and literary standards of his own and Rousseau's day, as "a masterpiece of genius, simplicity, candour, and courage."

Dorat was present at the second private reading of the *Confessions* at the house of his friend the Marquis de Pezai. We have the description given in a letter written immediately after the event by the susceptible poet, who imagined himself bound to share with a lady to whom he was temporarily devoted, all "the sweet and honourable impressions his heart experienced."

"I have come home, madame," wrote Dorat,[1] "intoxicated with admiration. I was prepared for a sitting of perhaps eight hours, but the reading took between fourteen and fifteen hours, without any other intervals than those required for meals; and these interruptions, brief though they were, appeared all too long to us. What a work, madame! How well Rousseau paints himself; and how one loves to recognize him in the portrait! *He acknowledges his good qualities with a noble frankness, and his faults with a frankness more noble still. He drew tears from us by the touching picture of his misfortunes; of his weaknesses; of his confidence repaid with ingratitude; of all the storms of his heart, so often wounded by the treacherous caresses of hypocrites;* above all, of his softer passions, still dear to the soul they have made unfortunate. And here, perchance my actual state, madame, as much as what I listened to, intensified my emotion. The good Jean Jacques, in his divine memoirs, makes of a woman he adored so enchanting and so lovable a picture, that it seemed to me I recognized *you* in the portrait, and I rejoiced in this resemblance; and this joy was exclusively my own. . . . .

"But do not let me speak of myself, lest I should lose your interest! In truth, the work I am telling you about is a masterpiece of genius, simplicity, candour, and courage. How many supposed giants transformed into

[1] First printed in the *Journal de Paris*, October 9, 1778.

dwarves! How many humble and virtuous men justified and avenged of the injustice of the wicked by the praise of one such honest man! Every one is named. *No one who has done the author the smallest kindness is passed over without acknowledgment: but, at the same time, he unmasks with equal truthfulness the impostors who abound in this epoch.* I dwell upon all this, madame, because I have read your generous, noble and delicate soul; because you love Rousseau; because you are worthy to admire him; because I should esteem it a sin to hide from you any of the sweet and honourable impressions my heart experiences."

We have now to see what was the judgment passed upon Rousseau's statement of his own case by the public at large when, eighteen years after the private readings and ten years after the author's death, his posthumous story of his misfortunes and wrongs was first given to the world.

It must be remembered that his enemies' statement of their case had been already given. A few months after his death, Diderot, whose attacks upon him had been hidden ones during his life-time, published in a note added on to his *Essay on Seneca* a savage denunciation of the scoundrel, hypocrite, maniac and monster, who, when he had been alive, this same Diderot spoke of as his "old friend Jean Jacques." La Harpe, the exponent of the views of the society of the Baron of Holbach, published in the *Mercure de France* an obituary notice of Rousseau crowded with calumnies.[1] In 1779, d'Alembert, going out of his way to write an obituary notice of Lord Marechal Keith, took the opportunity of introducing into his article the entirely false charge against Rousseau of base ingratitude and treachery towards his benefactor.[2]

In 1780,[3] La Harpe, in conjunction with Pierre Rousseau, the editor of the *Journal Encyclopèdique*, endeavoured to launch the theory that Jean Jacques had

[1] [2] [3] See Appendix, Note B.

basely stolen from an obscure young composer the music of his opera, the *Devin du Village*. Acquainted with all these calumnies, the public which received the first editions of the *Confessions* in 1788 did *not* decide that Rousseau's belief that his self-styled old friends and the society of Baron d'Holbach were his secret enemies and traducers proved the author of *Confessions* a suspicious maniac. But they held that these suspicions were justified by the behaviour of the very men he accused immediately after his death.

Ginguené's *Lettres sur les "Confessions,"* published in 1791, represents the authoritative criticisms of the Second Part of the *Confessions* by a writer who was able to compare Rousseau's statements with facts personally known to him. In the estimation of this competent critic the author of the *Confessions* had shown extraordinary moderation and had studiously respected the rule he laid down for himself of saying, even of his enemies, all the good he could, and only the evil he was compelled to reveal in order to explain his own history.

Ginguené made it his task to show that no charge made by Rousseau was founded upon mere suspicions, but that in every case his statements were based upon the facts of his own experience. And further, Ginguené proved that the persons the author of the *Confessions* accused of traducing and persecuting him could in every case be shown to have acted in the way he said, and to have used even more malice than he was aware of in their efforts to destroy his reputation. "Take Voltaire," wrote Ginguené. "Was Rousseau wrong when he described him as a secret and vindictive enemy? Consider Voltaire's sentiments towards Rousseau, expressed in different letters; consider his intimacy with Jean Jacques' enemies, in Paris, in Geneva, in England; consider what he is known to have said and written, as well as all the writings attributed to him. How could the fugitive and unfortunate author of *Emile* fail to regard him as an active and implacable enemy? In

this epoch, perhaps, it might seem that there were wrongs on both sides. But, no; one grieves to say it: nothing even in the *Letters from the Mountains* affords any excuse for the wicked and odious allusions to Rousseau in the War of Geneva, and (since the time has come for giving all men their due) in the execrable anonymous libel the *Sentiment of Citizens*. Without mentioning here the name of a man who is still alive, and who has been made famous only by Rousseau's accusations,[1] was not the philosopher Hume an enemy of Rousseau's? Was he not (at the very moment when he was posing in the world's sight as Jean Jacques' protector and benefactor) associated in the composition of a malicious letter, contrived to represent Rousseau as an impostor? Was not the philosopher d'Alembert Rousseau's enemy? Although during Jean Jacques' lifetime he dissimulated his hatred, were not Rousseau's suspicions of his malicious sentiments proved true, by d'Alembert's base accusation against him of ingratitude towards Milord Marechal,[2] an accusation as gratuitously false as it was libellous? Was not the philosopher Diderot, Rousseau's enemy? A secret enemy during his lifetime, who unmasked himself after his death by his gross and outrageous attack upon the memory of a man who had tenderly loved him; and who even in his *Confessions* accused him only of lightness and indiscretion, and of too easily allowing himself to be influenced by others? But to judge between Diderot and Jean Jacques, what is needed? Merely to compare the note to the *Essay on Seneca* with the note added on to the *Letter to d'Alembert;* or with the *Confessions*. I know all that our epoch owes to the two first editors of the *Encyclopædia*. I respect their courage, learning and literary talents. I am not discussing the motives of their hatred of Rousseau, I am merely pointing out that the violence of this hatred, and the difficulty of holding it in check, are proved by its outbreak immedi-

[1] Grimm.

[2] See Appendix, Note B.

ately after his death; and that this outbreak lends great probability to Rousseau's belief that it had been for a long time beforehand as secretly active as it was implacable. Finally, was not the reputed good-humoured and kindly Baron d'Holbach, if not a vindictive and bitter enemy of Rousseau's, at any rate a friend of a very singular and doubtful sort? But, here, I will not go to the *Confessions* for evidence—I will refer you to the letter of Cerutti of the 2nd December, 1789. To this let me add that I knew M. d'Holbach personally, and that I am willing to agree cordially in all the good things his friends say of him, but, all the same, I would point out that under his soft and good-natured appearance he had a great disposition to mockery, that there was something spiteful and cruel in his sarcasms, and that he had a domineering spirit. One fact is certain: doubtless every one does not love and admire Rousseau to the same extent, yet it is not ordinary to hear him described as an impostor, a scamp, a knave, or an infamous scoundrel.[1] Well: but an observation I have made, and from which you may derive any conclusions you please, is that I know scarcely any one belonging to the intimate society of the Baron d'Holbach who did not employ these epithets when speaking of Rousseau, and that I never heard them from the mouth of any man who did not belong to this society."

Cerutti's letter[2] alluded to by Ginguené is worth quoting, in connection with the modern assumption that the notion of a plot against Rousseau amongst *les Holbachiens*, as he himself styled the Baron's society, is too absurd to be considered. It will be noticed that in this letter *d'Holbach admits there was a conspiracy between Diderot, Grimm and himself against Rousseau* —"*Une conspiration amicale*," to serve Rousseau, in spite of himself, by the singular method of sowing division in his household.

[1] In 1791 it had not become the popular doctrine.

[2] It appeared in the *Journal de Paris*, Dec. 3, 1789.

"In the very hour of his fame," Cerutti makes d'Holbach say, "Rousseau had bound himself to a most sordid union. Impossible to imagine a more afflicting contrast than the one between his genius and his Thérèse. *Diderot, Grimm and I entered into a friendly conspiracy against this ridiculous and bizarre assemblage.* He took offence at our zeal. But the scene which determined his rupture with us, you will find it difficult to believe possible."

D'Holbach is here made to give a demonstrably false account of a scene made by Rousseau at his house in July 1755 [1]—

. . . . "We thought," thus, by Cerutti's account, d'Holbach continued, "that Rousseau's rage against us would cool down, and pass away. But it only increased as time went on. Diderot, Grimm and I sought vainly to regain him. He fled from us. Then his misfortunes began. Our only part in them was the affliction they gave us. But he thought our affliction a pretence, and believed we were the cause of all the evil that befell him. One had to renounce, not indeed pitying and admiring him, but loving him, or at least showing him love."

This account of d'Holbach's professed "affliction" at Rousseau's misfortunes, and of the pity and admiration he and his associates continued to feel for the unreasonable man who made it impossible for his old friends to go on loving him, must not, of course, be taken literally. We know that what d'Holbach, Diderot and Grimm actually professed to believe was that Rousseau's misfortunes were either imaginary or contrived by himself and his admirers to stimulate public sympathy, and win him notoriety. The epithets that Ginguené quote as familiarly employed by d'Holbach and his intimates about Rousseau do not express admiration and pity, but contempt and abhorrence. But the date of this letter must be remembered. In 1789, and still more in 1791, it was unsafe to describe the author of the *Contrat*

[1] See Appendix, Note C, vol. i. p. 364.

Social as "*Un gueux, un drôle, un vil coquin, un scélérat,*" etc.

Cerutti's letter to the *Journal de Paris* is the first public announcement of the revised doctrine, wherein it is no longer all Rousseau's old friends who had abandoned him because he had committed actions rendering him unworthy to associate with honest men, but Rousseau who had abandoned his old friends; not because he was really wicked or malicious, but because he was mad.

It is important to establish the true origins of this doctrine—often favoured by the most indulgent of those modern critics who agree in the view that it is "superfluous to investigate the charges made by the author of the *Confessions* against his old friends, because they stand condemned by their extravagance."

"All the partisans of Rousseau," state the authors of *Les Dernières Années de Madame d'Epinay*, "excuse him, by maintaining that he was mad. Let them have it so. But why then impose upon us as articles of faith, the visions of a madman? For how should one fail to recognize the crazy extravagance of these perpetual accusations against his friends? There is no way out of this dilemma. Either Jean Jacques was mad, and his allegations have no value; or he was in his right mind, and the calumnies he heaped on his friends justify the epithet of 'monster' Hume applied to him."

Attention to evidence shows that the dilemma presented to their readers by MM. Perey and Maugras has no historical existence: inasmuch as the partisans of Rousseau do not attempt to excuse him by maintaining that he was mad. The originators of this theory were not his partisans, but his old traducers; the same men, and the associates of the same men, who, in the days when it was safe to do so, described him as an artificial scoundrel, but who, in full Revolution, found it more prudent to adopt a different theory and profess the belief that the author of the *Confessions* was mad.

To sum up the conclusions reached:—it has been found,

1st, that, tried by the moral and literary standards of the epoch when the book was written, the *Confessions* was not judged a "revolting" work, proving the author's depravity, but that the work was pronounced a "masterpiece of genius, sincerity, and courage."

2nd. That judged by critics who knew personally the men accused by Rousseau as his secret persecutors and calumniators, his accusations were not considered either extravagant or exaggerated; but were pronounced entirely credible, and confirmed by actions of these same men after Rousseau's death.

3rd. The theory that Rousseau's assertions have no value because they were the allegations of a madman has been found to represent not a doctrine invented by apologists of Rousseau, but an apology made for themselves by the Holbachians still alive at the time of the Revolution.

In brief, the opinion of the best qualified judges of the *Confessions* does not support the modern opinion that this book alone proves the man who wrote it a monster of depravity; and in addition to this, "a liar" with regard to his old friends Grimm and Diderot; but the verdict of these judges leaves undisturbed the theory that Rousseau's character and life lent authority to his writings.

THE SECOND THEORY

The Sophist and Impostor Jean Jacques: or else The double-natured Rousseau

CHAPTER IV

THE ORIGINS OF, AND THE AUTHORITY FOR, THE MODERN DOCTRINE.—GRIMM'S LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE, 1812.—MADAME D'EPINAY'S MEMOIRS, 1818.

We have now to see how and why the judgment passed upon Rousseau and upon his *Confessions* by his contemporaries, and by the best minds in the generation after his own, came to be reversed; and by what circumstances and processes of reasoning, distinguished men of letters, who were not historical researchers, arrived at an exactly opposite doctrine of Rousseau's character to the one supported by Mirabeau, Kant and Schiller.

Let us trace back to its commencement the turning of the tide of public favour against Rousseau, and the resuscitation, as a sound argument, of Diderot's once unsuccessful plea—"too many honest men would be in the wrong, if Jean Jacques were in the right." We shall find that the starting-point of the change was the effect produced by a series of publications that followed each other, at short intervals, during a period of six years, from 1812 to 1818.

The two most important of these publications were: a printed edition of Grimm's secret manuscript journal, the *Correspondance Littéraire;* and the posthumous work of Madame d'Epinay's, incorrectly described as her *Memoirs.* But we have also to count as helpful to the impressions these books produced a series of articles published in the first edition of the *Biographie Universelle*, where, under the headings d'Epinay, Grimm,

George Keith, and J. J. Rousseau, old discredited libels were revived; and a volume entitled *Nouveau Supplément au Cours de Littérature de M. de la Harpe*, where La Harpe's former attacks upon Rousseau in the *Mercure* were reproduced.

If we examine under whose auspices these publications were made, we shall find ourselves amongst a group of literary editors and bibliographers who have, no doubt, rendered valuable services to students of France in the eighteenth century, but who, in so far as the deliberate defamation of J. J. Rousseau with the purpose of justifying Grimm and Diderot is concerned, were, beyond doubt, the continuators in the nineteenth century of the work done before the Revolution by the society of the Baron d'Holbach.

Four master editors stand out, amongst a group of men of letters, as the direct heirs of the Encyclopædists; heirs not merely of their sympathies and antipathies, but also, oddly enough, of their position of influence, as well as of their entirely unfair and dishonest methods of utilizing it. For, like the director of the *Encyclopædia* and the editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire*, in their day, these leaders of a new campaign of calumny against Rousseau, in an epoch when those who remembered the real man had disappeared (or were soon to disappear), exercised, as editors of the *Biographie Universelle*, the *Manuel des Libraires*, and the *Dictionnaire des Anonymes*, the powers of commanders-in-chief over a large army of contemporary writers, actually working under their directions; but who, in the eyes of the public, appeared as the independent supporters of the views they promulgated.

These four leading editors and publicists were—

1. Michaud, director and editor-in-chief of the *Biographie Universelle;* also one of the editors of the nine printed volumes of the first edition of Grimm's *Correspondance Littéraire.*

2. J. C. Brunet, author of the *Manuel des Libraires;*

also the purchaser of the original manuscript from which in 1818 he produced the three printed volumes he published under the title of *Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay.*

3. Antoine Alexandre Barbier, the most active and notable of the four. A. A. Barbier was Librarian to the Council of State under Napoleon ; and, after the Restoration, Director of the King's library. He is chiefly known to-day as the author of the *Dictionnaire des Anonymes;* but he was also an assistant-editor with Michaud of the *Biographie Universelle,* and one of the editors of the *Correspondance Littéraire.* Quérard in his *France Littéraire,* and Boiteau in the preface to his second edition of the *Memoirs,* report that it was to A. A. Barbier in the first instance that the manuscript of Madame d'Epinay's posthumous work—afterwards purchased by J. C. Brunet—was offered, and that he kept it for some time and wrote an analysis of the nine volumes.[1] He wrote, at any rate, in the guise of a preface to his *Nouveau Supplément au Cours de Littérature de la Harpe,* a laudatory introductory advertisement for J. C. Brunet's edition of the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay.*

4. Jean Baptiste Suard, a member of the French Academy, before the Revolution, and its secretary, under Napoleon, and after the Restoration. J. B. Suard, although more than seventy years of age in 1812, was not only one of the most active editors of the *Correspondance Littéraire ;* he appears to have been the originator of

[1] This analysis of the original manuscript by A. A. Barbier would be of extreme interest could it be discovered. I have, up to the present moment, hunted vainly through the public libraries in Paris for any copy of a work which is nevertheless given by Quérard and Vapereau amongst the published books of A. A. Barbier. My own experience teaches me caution in the way of positive assertions about the impossibility of recovering lost documents ; but Barbier would seem to have withdrawn his own analysis of Madame d'Epinay's original work out of consideration for J. C. Brunet and Parison, who had transformed it into the printed *Memoirs.* Nevertheless if this analysis ever was printed and published, it is hardly probable that every copy could have been destroyed.

the literary enterprise of collecting and printing this secret chronicle that throughout the eighteenth century was read only by its *abonnés*. It was Suard who obtained (from what sources have not been disclosed) the portion of the *Correspondance* and the private letters of Grimm that were reproduced in a supplement to the first edition.[1] The reader has to recollect that this is the same Jean Baptiste Suard who in 1767 had assisted d'Alembert to translate into French, and introduce by a preface, Hume's "Succinct Exposure" of the dispute between himself and J. J. Rousseau, and that in the biography of Suard by Garat, it stands stated, that the *Baron d'Holbach loved him as a brother* ("le Baron d'Holbach le chérissait comme un frère").

Here then, if proofs were needed of a fact that becomes palpable when we attend to the methods of these editors, we have established the connection between the literary *côterie* in the eighteenth century where (and where only by Ginguené's account) Jean Jacques was habitually described as an impostor, a scoundrel, and a calumniator, and the group of editors in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, who were responsible for the collection and dissemination of libels calculated to produce upon the public mind the impression that Rousseau had really deserved these names.

Let us now see, in connection with the most important of these publications, viz. the *Correspondance Littéraire* and the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay*, both the claims made for them and the authority for these claims.

The *Correspondance Littéraire* represented (as has been said) a chronicle of literary, social and political gossip sent away from Paris every fortnight during a period of thirty-seven years (1753–1790). Grimm, the responsible editor, had the active assistance of Diderot and Madame d'Epinay throughout the period of his

[1] See in the excellent edition of the *Correspondance Littéraire*, edited by M. Maurice Tourneux, his introductory notice, vol. i., and also vol. xvi. for the best account of this publication.

secret campaign of calumny against Rousseau. From 1770 onwards the laborious duties of editorship were taken off his hands by Mercier, a Swiss of Zurich, but the new editor of the *Correspondance* still acted under his predecessor's direction.

The essential characteristic of this secret manuscript journal, in an epoch when the activity of the censorship made secret journalism almost a necessity, was that the *abonnés* to the *Correspondance Littéraire* were the ruling Sovereigns in Europe, and a select circle of Ministers, leading politicians, queens of society, and conspicuous men of letters, who, taken together, represented the material and intellectual controllers of the prosperity or adversity of any marked individual in Europe. Mr. Morley does not adequately describe the position of influence held by the editor of this secret journal, when he affirms that Grimm "became the literary correspondent of several German sovereigns." He was the literary correspondent, in the first place, of Frederick of Prussia and of Catherine of all the Russias; those powerful rulers who made it their pride to be protectors of letters, and of persecuted authors of genius. After these potentates, George the Third of England certainly received, if he did not subscribe to, the *Correspondance Littéraire*. The King of Poland and Queen of Sweden were *abonnés*. The reigning Duchess, and after her the reigning Duke of Saxe-Gotha were its constant supporters; so were the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, the Margrave of Anspach, the Duke des Deux Ponts; the Prince of Brunswick Wolfenbüttel. It will be understood that the secrecy upon which the existence of the manuscript journal depended, stood in the way of any precise record of the editor's most important patrons amongst Royal people. But I am printing here for the first time a list given in a document that will be found amongst Grimm's papers preserved at the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, of the *abonnés* who had paid their subscriptions during the years 1763–1766 :—

Duchesse de Saxe-Gotha	288
Baronne de Buchwald	144
Princesse Palatine, Duchess des deux Ponts	24
Prince Héréditaire Hesse Darmstadt	144
Princes et Princesses (enfants de la Princesse Héréditaire)	144
Marquise de la Ferté Imbault	24
Marquise de Polignac (Dame d'honneur de la Duchesse d'Orleans)	24
Madame la Princess de B.	240
M. and Mme. Necker	240
M. Bethuen de Bordeaux	240
M. Bergerat	6
Mlle. de Marx	6
M. Helvétius	144
Une Société de Messieurs	300
M. Delorme, Maître des Eaux et des Forêts	4
M. Gatti, médecin du roi	6
H. Walpole	6
M. le Porteur	6
M. de la Fosse	194
Le Comte de Creutz	4
Comte de Werther	12
Marquis de Tavistock	48
Comte de Pléard	48
M. de la Live	24
Diderot	6
Commission de Genève	12
Le Porteur	12
Mme. de B.	96
S. A. Prince Héréditaire de Brunswick Wolfenbüttel	120
Mozart, Maître de Chapelle	6
Duchesse d'Enville[1]	1200
	4020

[1] The Duchess d'Enville, who rented Voltaire's house at Geneva, was no doubt as the patroness of the *Correspondance Littéraire* a

This list as it stands, although it is not to be accepted as a complete one, sufficiently indicates the different spheres of influence thrown open to the editor. If he chose to use his opportunities for sowing false statements against a private enemy, the victim, although ignorant of the calumnies circulated against him, would nevertheless feel their results in rumours and evil reports of him, current in different countries; and in the suspicious or malevolent behaviour towards him of persons who had received these libels as secret information, that could not be verified, because the sources it came from were confidential and personal.

But are we free to assume that Grimm did use his position of editor of a secret journal whose *abonnés* were the Rulers of Europe, to circulate malignant and gratuitous calumnies against Rousseau? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that, called upon as a chronicler of passing events to keep his patrons informed of the doings and writings of a much-talked-of man, he said what he honestly thought about a personage he disliked, and about an author whose genius he was, by his own positive and logical temper, unable to appreciate?

We are free to assume nothing in this inquiry. The only way of determining whether Grimm was a truthful critic or a gratuitous calumniator of Rousseau is to *compare his statements about his old friend Jean Jacques in the Correspondance Littéraire, with the facts of Rousseau's life as Grimm knew them to be; and the criticism of his books, with the books themselves.* The results obtained (as we shall presently see) are conclusive. They show that Grimm attributed to Rousseau

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screen for Voltaire himself. See in Moultou's letters to Rousseau from 1762 to 1765, the frequent references to the salon of the Duchesse d'Enville as the place where Voltaire, Tronchin, and other enemies of Rousseau discuss him: thus Letter xix, p. 50 (July 7, 1762), Letter xxiv, p. 57 (August 21, 1762), Letter liv, p. 100 (July 15, 1763), *J. J. Rousseau, ses Amis et ses Ennemis.* Streckeisen-Moultou.

actions he knew well his old friend had never committed; and that he condemned and ridiculed in his writings principles and opinions which are nowhere professed by Rousseau. They show, too, that the purpose of these falsehoods was to create in the minds of high and mighty personages on whom a persecuted author would necessarily depend for protection, the impression that here was a mischievous sophist and a dangerous demagogue who, wherever he settled, created quarrels and disorder.

Unfortunately, however, this method of inquiry, although a simple, is a laborious one. It was not the one adopted when the publication of the *Correspondance Littéraire*, in 1812, gave to the world for the first time, thirty-four years after Rousseau's death (that is to say, when the true man was forgotten), the whole collection of libels against him that Grimm had industriously circulated amongst his illustrious patrons during a period of thirty-seven years; and, moreover, gave these libels as unanswered statements; because (as has been said) neither Rousseau nor any of his defenders knew about this underground stream of calumnies flowing in hidden places. For judges who based their opinions on what it seems most reasonable to suppose, it may easily be understood that the conclusion reached was that a man incessantly represented upon all manner of different occasions as false, treacherous, ungrateful, must, if even he did not deserve all the evil said of him, have deserved a goodly portion of it.

Yet the impression produced by the *Correspondance Littéraire* would hardly have sustained itself, and especially it would not have affected the opinions of the large number of readers for whom criticism is always tiresome, and only narrative entertaining, had not these nine volumes sown with libels been soon followed by a shorter work, where all the charges against Rousseau reappeared interwoven amongst the incidents of a vivacious and well-written story. This novel with a purpose was published in 1818, under the title of *Mémoires de*

Madame d'Epinay. The manuscript employed by J. C. Brunet, the editor, professed he had purchased in 1817, from the heirs of a person unknown to fame but described as a former secretary of Grimm's, and called Lecourt de Villière. Quérard and Boiteau, it has been seen, affirm that before being acquired by Brunet, the manuscript had been offered to A. A. Barbier, and we shall presently find it proved that before 1815 the editors of the *Biographie Universelle* must have been familiar with the manuscript afterwards used by the editor of these so-called Memoirs. By the account given in a preface which introduced this edition, Madame d'Epinay's posthumous work was said to represent her reminiscences; containing her own justification and the justification of her lover Grimm from the charges brought against them by the author of the *Confessions.* It was further alleged by the writer of this preface that Madame d'Epinay had not intended this work for publication, but that it was written by her for the entertainment of a chosen circle of friends to whom she had been in the habit of reading it aloud, during the last years of her life. Grimm, who had inherited it after her death, had not only neglected to publish it, but had contemptuously described it in the account he gave of the manuscripts left by Madame d'Epinay, as the sketch of a long novel, —"*l'ébauche d'un long roman.*"

"This novel," affirmed the editor of the printed book, "was, as a matter of fact, the lady's *Memoirs.*" Why Grimm should have described Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs* as the "sketch of a novel," and why especially he did not publish a work full of literary merit, and which seemed especially written for his own (Grimm's) glorification, J. C. Brunet did not attempt to explain. Nor did he explain how he himself came to discover this very interesting manuscript thus late in the day, in the possession of persons whom he did not name otherwise than as "the heirs of Lecourt de Villière."

But here, too, the *Memoirs* were accepted by the

general reader in good faith; and the delay in publication was supposed to have arisen naturally as a result of the motive of the authoress to justify herself in the eyes of her private friends only, in a journal written without any notion that it would ever be made public, still less be handed down to posterity. Evidently also the accidental character attributed to the discovery of the manuscript enhanced the value of Madame d'Epinay's testimony as that of a witness taken unawares, and off her guard; and whose corroboration of the charges made by the editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire* was consequently a proof of their veracity.

We shall have by and by to examine whether attention to the facts of the case allows us to believe that it was by accident that the discovery of the manuscript work left by Madame d'Epinay followed immediately after the death of the last person amongst Rousseau's contemporaries who could have contradicted the account given in it of the quarrel between Rousseau and his old friends.

But here we must attend to the other writings, prepared to appear in such a way as to lend support to the theory of Rousseau's character set forth in the *Correspondance Littéraire*, and in the *Memoirs;* and to strengthen the impressions these works produced.

Different articles in the *Biographie Universelle* and in the *Manuel des Libraires* were used to revive old discredited libels against Rousseau, refuted and rejected by his contemporaries; but which, resuscitated when the disputes that had once occupied public attention were forgotten, served to give new force to the argument that where there is smoke there is fire; and that if Rousseau were innocent, it seems strange so many different persons should unite to describe an honest man as an impostor.

Amongst the articles in the *Biographie Universelle* containing allusions to Rousseau, the notice upon Madame d'Epinay is especially important: because it confirms the statements that the manuscript employed

for the production of Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs* was, before its purchase by J. C. Brunet, in the possession of A. A. Barbier.

Barbier, it must not be forgotten, was one of the editors of the *Biographie Universelle;* and we feel this editor at the elbow of the contributor Laporte, who writes and signs the notice upon Madame d'Epinay, giving him special information, intended to prepare the way for the publication that was to be made three years later. It may safely be affirmed that when the first edition of the *Biographie Universelle* appeared, no one had ever heard of the existence of a work of Madame d'Epinay's destined to serve as a reply to the author of the *Confessions.* A sufficient proof exists of the falsity of the statement that Madame d'Epinay was in the habit of reading this work to a private circle of friends, and that its existence and purpose were open secrets. When the Second Part of the *Confessions* appeared, in 1789, Ginguené, as we have seen, directly challenged Grimm and Grimm's friend, to defend him against Rousseau's charges, if they were false. Can it be supposed that if the secret that Madame d'Epinay had written a reply to the *Confessions* had been an open one, no defender of Grimm's would have reminded Ginguené of the existence of this work ?

"Some of Madame d'Epinay's contemporaries affirm," wrote Laporte in the *Biographie Universelle*, "that they knew the *Memoirs* of her life, a work apparently intended to destroy the displeasing impressions of her left by Rousseau's account of her given in the Second Part of the *Confessions.* This work was kept for a long time in manuscript form, and the authoress was in the habit of reading it aloud to a number of her most assiduous friends. It is further said these very interesting *Memoirs* were suppressed, either by Madame d'Epinay herself, or by Grimm. One cannot but regret it ! Who would not have wished to hear the two society women upon whom this famous author has, with such grave

indiscretion, fastened public attention, not indeed defend themselves, for neither Madame d'Epinay nor Madame d'Houdetot appear to have merited any blame —but relate their version of the story, and reply to a man who had on his side the huge advantage of pleading his own cause unanswered and with all the force lent him by the most seductive style?"

It will be observed that no attempt is made by Laporte to specify who were the contemporaries who affirmed that they had known the *Memoirs* of Madame d'Epinay. In the conditions of prevailing ignorance of the author's intention, his affirmation provoked neither comment nor inquiry. It was only three years later that the object of these affirmations might (had any critic been on his guard) have been discovered. In the preface to J. C. Brunet's edition of the printed *Memoirs*, the editor quotes the author of the notice on Madame d'Epinay in the *Biographie Universelle* as his authority, *and the only authority he can cite*, for the assertion that Madame d'Epinay's contemporaries knew she had written the *Memoirs* of her life!

"Several persons," wrote the author of the preface, "who knew that Madame d'Epinay had written the *Memoirs* of her life, and that at her death the manuscript remained in Grimm's hands, had appeared to fear that Grimm had suppressed the work. Such, for instance, is the opinion of the author of the notice upon Madame d'Epinay in the *Biographie Universelle*."

Another notice in the *Biographie Universelle* affords proof that the manuscript used for Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs* was in the hands of the editors. In the article under the heading "J. J. Rousseau," by Sevelinges,[1] was reproduced a libellous story which is the original inven-

[1] S. V. S. signature. Sevelinges belonged to the circle of the Encyclopædists. Diderot, writing to Mlle. Voland on Nov. 17, 1765, says, "La Baronne (d'Holbach) nous prit, Grimm M. Sevelinges et moi, dans son carosse: nous allâmes en corps entendre le Pantalone," etc.—*Corresp. de Diderot.*

tion of the author of the *Memoirs*, and is found in no other version of these events—viz. the imaginary incident of the anonymous letter sent to Saint-Lambert, which in Madame d'Epinay's story is made to explain how the Marquis in Westphalia came to be informed that Jean Jacques and Madame d'Houdetot were taking too long and too frequent rambles in the forest of Montmorency. The motive of this invented anonymous letter was to find a method of escape from the conclusion that Rousseau's suspicions were correct: and that Madame d'Epinay must have been the person who let Saint-Lambert know that his mistress was consoling herself in his absence by a perilous flirtation with Rousseau.

The article by Sevelinges upon J. J. Rousseau, published under the direction of Michaud and A. A. Barbier, as editors of the *Biographie Universelle*, excited a great deal of indignation in circles where Rousseau's memory was still respected.

This is how Quérard speaks of the notice in his *France Contemporaine*:—

"The notice of J. J. Rousseau in volume xxxix. of the *Biographie Universelle* is an *infamous libel*. It has been made the subject of a protest inserted in the *Globe*, vol. i. p. 335, and we reproduce it literally, *because it seems to us to describe, in so far as Rousseau is concerned, the spirit M. Michaud has given his publication*. 'A living man who is calumniated can invoke the aid of the law; but calumny in history can only be denounced and exposed by the public. Journalists, who represent public opinion, ought then to punish it by denouncing it. In volume xxxix. of the *Biographie Universelle*, at the article "J. J. Rousseau," where one would expect to find a critical appreciation of a famous man, one finds merely a spiteful selection from his own *Confessions* of the stories about his faults exclusively. So far one has only to complain of the waste of time and the lack of criticism. But what is much graver, two imputations are made which, if advanced at all, required

to be supported by solid proofs. Thus the biographer affirms that Rousseau was the author of an anonymous letter to Saint-Lambert and that he did not hesitate to lay the charge of this base action to some one else. What authority does he quote to prove that infamous charge? *The Memoirs of Marmontel*,[1] without giving the page, and the testimony of a person he does not name, who had (so it is said) as good opportunities as Marmontel had, to know the real facts. As if one ever had good opportunities for knowing the author of an anonymous letter! Or as if, in the event of possessing such knowledge, one were not bound to indicate how one had obtained it, when making one's information public. The writer elsewhere insinuates that it was not an old ribbon which Rousseau stole in the house of Madame de Vercellis. At first sight the object stolen may seem of small importance, when the theft is admitted. But if Jean Jacques imposed upon his readers when making this avowal, the merit and pathos of his repentance would be spoilt by this falsehood—so thus one would naturally expect that S. V. S. would bring some irrefutable proofs in support of this grave allegation?

"'But here we have his own words: "*Inquiries made a long time since in the home of this event have led to the presumption that this 'old ribbon' was in reality a silver spoon*; other people say, *a diamond.*" One must have a great taste for defamation to reproduce, in a professedly historical notice, rumours of this sort, which have only one merit—that they contradict each other. It may easily be understood that immediately after the death of a celebrated man—when all the passions that were felt and excited by him are still living memories around his coffin, people may eagerly discuss his character and actions; and that those who were jealous

[1] Marmontel says nothing whatever about an anonymous letter attributed to Madame d'Epinay. He follows Diderot and accuses Rousseau of having written "an atrocious letter" to Saint-Lambert.

of the superiority of his genius, may studiously hunt up and dilate upon his private weaknesses. That is a pleasure belonging to contemporaries, which in this case we need not envy our fathers. But when the ashes of a great writer are cold, and when posterity is called upon to judge—to arrive with the spiteful gossip and slanders of the scandal-mongers of fifty years ago, is to offend against the respect one owes to genius, to one's readers and to one's self.' The editors of the *Globe* have added to this letter the following reflections: 'After reading this letter, we made it our task to look up the article denounced. As a matter of fact, this notice is written with savage hatred (écrit avec une haine acharnée). We do not know the works of Monsieur S. V. S. But he should be an ineffably superior being who can wind up his notice by such a sentence as this: "The writer who took for his motto *Vitam impendere vero* has not perhaps left behind him one truthful utterance useful to the human race." If S. V. S. is merely ridiculous, what are we to say of M. Michaud?'"

Another publication has to be noticed. In 1818, a few months after the appearance of the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* by J. C. Brunet, A. A. Barbier published a volume under the title of *Nouveau Supplément au cours de Littérature de M. de la Harpe.*

The so-called Supplement to La Harpe's *Cours de Littérature* represented merely a reprint from the *Mercure* of his libellous articles against Rousseau, but the volume gains importance from the preface, where we find it plainly stated by A. A. Barbier, that, *with the Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay, and with Grimm's Correspondance, the Supplement was intended to produce a reversal of the judgment passed upon Rousseau by his contemporaries.*

"The apology of the great men of the eighteenth century against J. J. Rousseau," wrote A. A. Barbier in his preface, "is contained in the account given by M. de la Harpe in the *Mercure de France* of M. Ginguené's

Letters upon the *Confessions*. In these well-written letters, M. Ginguené had shown himself convinced of the real existence of a sort of conspiracy amongst the eighteenth century philosophers against the most eloquent man amongst them. M. de la Harpe, who had remarked on a number of occasions the *fatal symptoms of the malady by which J. J. Rousseau was tormented*, defended with manly energy the great men accused in the *Confessions* and by M. Ginguené. These articles, five in number, form a work distinguished by a fine style and by force of argument.[1] The malady of J. J. Rousseau took such developments that, in the last years of his life he believed the whole world conspired against him. M. J. C. Brunet, author of the excellent *Manuel des Libraires*, has just published the *Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame d'Epinay;* where the authoress gives the details of her relationships with Duclos, J. J. Rousseau, Grimm, Diderot, the Baron d'Holbach and other celebrated personages in the eighteenth century. The details given by Madame d'Epinay ought to show in their true light the suspicions and precautions of J. J. Rousseau against his principal friends. Already Grimm's *Correspondance Littéraire* had greatly contributed to rehabilitate the memory of this philosophical man of letters. Thus it happens that a severe and an impartial posterity sooner or later re-establishes the truth obscured by the passions and prejudices of contemporaries. One experiences a sweet satisfaction, when these revelations contribute to the justification of men distinguished by their talents."

Later on in this inquiry we shall discover how insecure were the foundations of A. A. Barbier's "sweet satisfaction" in the belief that the publication of the *Correspondance Littéraire* would serve to rehabilitate Grimm, and to justify him from the charge of being a gratuitous calumniator of Rousseau if ever "a severe and an impartial posterity" took the trouble to re-establish

[1] See Appendix, Note C C, vol. i. p. 366.

by historical investigations the true facts of his treatment of his old friend Jean Jacques.

But, first of all, we have to see how Barbier's satisfaction was justified by the immediate impression these publications produced, not only upon the general reader, but also upon critics who were men of letters, and not historical researchers—literary connoisseurs, to use an expression favoured by Saint-Beuve, whose special function was not to sift evidence, but to deal intelligently and artistically with ideas and opinions as they were presented to them.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPRESSION MADE UPON LITERARY CONNOISSEURS B MADAME D'EPINAY'S MEMOIRS.

THE position taken up by literary critics who forme their judgment of Jean Jacques Rousseau upon Grimm Literary Correspondence and Madame d'Epinay's *Memoi* is one that recommends itself at first sight by its extrem reasonableness.

With regard to Grimm first of all. It is not claime for him that he is an entirely impartial or a trustworth judge of Rousseau. It is admitted that he disliked hin for personal reasons; it is also recognized that h position and practical spirit rendered him insensible t Rousseau's peculiar merits as a literary artist. Bu when allowances have been made for these antipathi and limitations, it is affirmed that Grimm had a cle head and a judicial mind; that he knew Rousseau ver well: and that his opinion is worth considering.

Again, with regard to Madame d'Epinay: it is n claimed that her *Memoirs* give us a faultlessly exact an an historically accurate narrative of her relations wit Rousseau. Here, too, we must make allowances, an understand that when painting her own picture, and th pictures of the men and women of her society, this skilf artist has naturally flattered some of her portraits, an exaggerated the ugly features in others. In the case her ungrateful *protégé*, Jean Jacques, we may take it f granted that when describing his behaviour Madam d'Epinay has heightened the colour of his offences; an toned down any causes he may have had for irritati against Grimm for high-handed treatment of his foibl and extravagances; and any cause of dissatisfaction wi

herself for indiscretion or curiosity in connection with his passion for Madame d'Houdetot. But when all these admissions have been made, there still remains, in addition to the strong argument of the agreement between her own description and Grimm's, an irresistible impression (so these literary critics decide) that her portrait is too vivid and startling in its reality not to be painted from the life.

But about Madame d'Epinay's merits as a painter of the life of her epoch, and about the impression of essential veracity conveyed by her *Memoirs*, let us hear the opinion of critics who were themselves word-painters of extraordinary merit—I mean the Brothers de Goncourt.

"We have a masterpiece produced in this epoch," wrote the authors of *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle*, "a masterpiece by a woman's hands, where the excellence is not due to imagination, but to observation; a psychological observation which penetrates and interprets character and feeling. The woman who has given us this strange and fascinating book wrote under the charm of a novel of Rousseau's. She, too, imagined herself to be writing a novel. But it is her own life she discloses—her own epoch that she lays bare. She had only aspired to equal the *Nouvelle Héloïse*—she succeeded in surpassing the *Confessions!* For in Rousseau's *Confessions* we have one man, but in Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs* we have a whole society. Marriage customs and intrigues, domestic life and adultery, conventions and scandals, old institutions and prejudices, and restless new ideas; the whole drama in all its general aspects is played out before us, at the same time that special scenes unravel their complications and reach their climax. And around these facts of the daily life, the atmosphere of the century circulates. Conversations come to us from this book with the sound of voices. We hear the guests chatter, sitting round Mlle. Quinault's dinner table. Indiscreetly, we listen at

the door to the scene of jealousy between Madame d'Epinay and Madame de Versel, an admirable scene—no dialogue upon our modern stage equals it in naturalness! The faces of the women stand out from the pages of the book. Madame d'Arty, Madame d'Houdetot, Madame de Jully, Mlle. d'Ette, all personages who have in them the breath of life; and this warm breath passes into their speech. Duclos frightens one: and Rousseau's likeness is terrifying. The smaller men too, Margency and his peers, are painted in a few words, sketched to the very soul of them, as they pass. Incomparable confessions—where, from the study of the world around her, of her husband, of her lover, of her friends, of her family the woman returns constantly to the study of herself to the recognition of her own weaknesses, searching out her mind and her heart, counting its beatings, exposing its cowardice and frailty. Self-knowledge, and the knowledge of others, have never perhaps under any man's pen gone so far as this; under no woman's pen can they go further."

Here we have a judgment delivered by literary connoisseurs that all appreciative readers of the *Memoirs* will pronounce correct. It is true that this skilful artist knows how to call back to life social surroundings and states of feeling that men and women of like passions with ourselves once knew, but which have ceased to exist. True, that she gives us an entrance into her salon, and that the conversations going on there reach us "like the sound of voices." True that, by her talent the sun is made to shine again upon a world where the sun has ceased to shine—but (and this is a question that at once shows us the difference between the purpose of literary and of historical criticism) because she has made the sun shine again *does she necessarily render a true account of the things done under this sun?*

The assumption is that she does: not perhaps a literal and an exact account, that can stand the testing of every detail: but an account that leaves a true

impression. Even the de Goncourts took this for granted. "*Duclos*," they wrote: "*effraye. Rousseau ressemble à faire peur.*" But the Duclos who frightens one by his cynical malice and wickedness in the *Memoirs* was, by the verdict of his contemporaries, one of the most estimable men of his time. But the sophist and hypocrite Rousseau of the *Memoirs*, who so closely resembles the "monster" painted by Diderot and Grimm, was the "virtuous citizen of Geneva," painted by impartial witnesses.

If we examine into the matter attentively, we shall find that, with men of letters especially, it is before all things admiration of the essential veracity of Madame d'Epinay (when tried by literary and artistic standards) which convinces them that the portrait we have of Rousseau in her *Memoirs* must be accepted as historically correct—a portrait painted from the life. And this portrait has the same features which characterize the picture of Jean Jacques given by the editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire*. Here, then, we have arrived at the foundations of the doctrine of Rousseau's repulsive personality held by Sainte-Beuve, by Saint-Marc Girardin and by E. Scherer, and after these distinguished French critics (counted by the English biographer of Rousseau the saner and more rational of those who have judged him) by Mr. John Morley.

In the case of Sainte-Beuve, the literary allegiance to the authoress of the *Memoirs* is easily established. One has only to refer to the *Causeries* and to the incessantly quoted articles—the first, upon Madame d'Epinay, June 1850, where Rousseau is accused by implication of having falsified the letters he reproduces in the *Confessions;* the second on Grimm, January 1852, where Rousseau is frankly called a liar—in order to realize that the foundations of Sainte-Beuve's convictions are upon his belief in the essential veracity of Madame d'Epinay.

It should, however, be recognized that Sainte-Beuve himself never professed to have pronounced an authori-

tative historical sentence upon Rousseau: that he gave his *opinion* emphatically in favour of Madame d'Epinay and of Grimm, and against the author of the *Confessions*, as a conviction that satisfied him, and not as a final historical judgment that every one was bound to accept; and that he prefaced one of the most emphatic and important of these statements of his private opinions with the words: "Il ne saurait être de mon dessein d'examiner ici ce procès."

Amongst critics of the *Correspondance Littéraire*, Sainte-Beuve distinguished himself by affirming that Grimm was not only honest, but positively generous, in his treatment of Rousseau. The only supposition one can make which explains this astonishing assertion, is that the author of the *Causeries* did not in this case, either, feel it incumbent upon him to examine the facts: but that he based his conclusions solely upon Grimm's avoidance, in the sort of biographical sketch he drew up of his old friend's youth and early manhood, of all mention of the sending of his children to the Foundling Hospital. As a matter of fact, this biographical sketch, as will presently be seen, was especially planned to produce the false impression that Rousseau had been prepared by humiliations and bitter experiences in early manhood for the *rôle* of a mischievous demagogue and a sour-tempered misanthrope; and especially for a secret malicious hatred of "great people"—such as were the *abonnés* to the *Correspondance Littéraire*. His hints about the domestic life of one whom he has endeavoured to paint as base and despicable in all his relations, can hardly be supposed to indicate respect for the obligation of old friendship; and we shall not fail to discover the true reasons for this apparent reticence later on.

But let us hear Sainte-Beuve himself:—

"In the *Correspondance Littéraire*," affirms this critic, "Rousseau is not badly treated, as one would have expected him to be. Even when his principles and systems are condemned, his talents are highly praised.

Grimm takes his stand by the Discourse upon Inequality. Here he finds the whole of Rousseau's doctrine. In a just and masterly argument, he fixes the precise point where he considers this eloquent writer goes astray, and where his doctrine lapses into extravagance; and he makes it his task to refute what is false, and to rectify the central idea—viz. Rousseau's pretension to lead man back to one knows not what golden age, at which point he regrets that human progress was not arrested. . . . . In the kind of biography [1] which Grimm gave of Rousseau at the time of *Emile* (June 15, 1762), the author of the *Correspondance Littéraire* stops short in his reminiscences at the point when they might lead to indiscreet revelations, and to a violation of the claims of an old friendship; and after tracing the principal epochs of Rousseau's life and his first more or less strange adventures, he adds: '*His private and domestic life would not make a less curious story, but it is written in the memory of one or two of his old friends* who from self-respect, refrain from writing it elsewhere.' Had Grimm been the perfidious traitor Rousseau believed, what a fine opportunity he might have had here to relate what, in contrast to the doctrines set forth in *Emile*, had been Rousseau's conduct to his own children; as well as many other details, that were only made known afterwards by the *Confessions*."

It is not, however, in reality Grimm or the *Correspondance Littéraire*, which has produced upon Sainte-Beuve's mind the impression that Jean Jacques Rousseau was a calumniator. It is Madame d'Epinay who fascinates this literary connoisseur, as she fascinated those other literary connoisseurs, the de Goncourts, with her charm as a *maîtresse de salon*, in that world whereon the sun has set; and where she still entertains modern guests able to feel themselves at home in her domain, and to accept at her hands her introductions to famous people, and to men and women whose names have died, all upon

[1] See vol. ii. pp. 95–100.

equal terms. Accomplished travellers like Sainte-Beuve, E. Scherer and the de Goncourts, in these domains of the mind where this typical woman of good society keeps always open house, show the sensitiveness of favoured guests to a charming hostess, where Madame d'Epinay is concerned. They are irritated by a small and petty criticism (as they take it to be) which convicts this fascinating *maîtresse de salon* of inaccurate statements. Let fault-finders leave Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs* alone—the fact that they find faults proves them bad critics.

"The *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay*," affirmed Sainte-Beuve, "are not a book only, they give us an epoch. All the literature of the time is in Grimm: all the life of society is in Madame d'Epinay."

Et voilà. As to the origins of the book, whether it was rightly called the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay;* whether it was a novel, that had been doctored by the editor of the printed edition; whether this editor's story of how the original manuscript came into his hands were not suspiciously vague, etc.,—about all these questions, the author of the *Causeries* not only had not a word to say, but showed no consciousness that they had ever been discussed, or deserved discussion.

It hardly seems possible that Sainte-Beuve, writing in 1850–52, was unaware that Musset Pathay, in 1818 and in 1826, had called in question all the statements made by J. C. Brunet, or by Parison, in the preface to the first edition of the *Memoirs.* Yet the author of the *Causeries* repeats all Brunet's assertions about the lucky discovery of this work that "ran a great risk of remaining unknown—when it fell into the hands of the learned editor, M. Brunet."

Sainte-Beuve takes Madame d'Epinay as literally as her editor. He bases his opinion of Grimm on the account given in the *Memoirs* and warns readers against the falsehoods—as he assumes them to be—told by the author of the *Confessions.*

"Grimm," writes Sainte-Beuve, "*as I recognize him from the testimony given by his friend*, is an upright, a judicious, a reliable man; formed in early youth for commerce with the world, having a poor opinion of men in general and judging them severely, and with none of the false views and philanthropic illusions of the time. Let us be on our guard against judging him by Rousseau's account, who never forgave him for *having been the first to penetrate with a clear and pitiless gaze his incurable vanity*. . . . People are not just to Grimm. One never hears his name mentioned without some displeasing adjective tacked on to it. For some time I had myself a prejudice against him. But when I inquired into the cause of this prejudice, I found that my dislike to Grimm was only based on the statements made about him by J. J. Rousseau in his *Confessions*. But Rousseau, whenever his diseased self-love and morbid vanity are concerned, has no scruples about lying. And I have arrived at this conviction—that with regard to Grimm, he was a liar."

We are not told by what mental process Sainte-Beuve had reached this conviction. But the clue is found later on in the same *Causerie*. In connection with the final rupture between Rousseau and Madame d'Epinay, Sainte-Beuve draws attention to the different versions of important letters given in the *Memoirs*, and in the *Confessions*:—

"It does not belong to me to decide the case," he writes; "but when one reads Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs* on the one hand, and the *Confessions* on the other, one discovers that letters quoted in both works—letters that should serve to throw light upon the questions at issue—are not reproduced in the same way: in other words, *upon one side or the other these important letters have been falsified, and some one has lied. I do not believe it was Madame d'Epinay.*"

That is to say, here again Sainte-Beuve had "arrived at the conviction" that Rousseau was a liar.

But twelve years after the author of the *Causeries* had confided to the world his views, the only evidence that could satisfactorily decide the case proved that Sainte-Beuve's "conviction" was a blunder. In 1865 M. Streckeisen-Moultou published from the original autographs preserved in the Neuchatel Public Library, the authentic letters of Madame d'Epinay, of Rousseau, of Diderot and of Grimm, differently reproduced in the *Confessions* and in the *Memoirs*.[1] This publication establishes finally that Rousseau had reproduced the true documents: and that the "some one" who had lied, by falsifying evidence serving to throw light upon the questions at issue, *was* the author of the *Memoirs*.

It is characteristic of the methods of criticism followed in this particular case, that M. Streckeisen-Moultou's volumes *J. J. Rousseau, ses Amis et ses Ennemis*, are frequently quoted by the same critics, who continue to cite, as though it remained an authoritative sentence, Sainte-Beuve's "conviction" that, with regard to Grimm and Madame d'Epinay, J. J. Rousseau was a liar.

In so far as Sainte-Beuve is concerned, he was justified in saying that the character of his delightful essays in literature, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* weekly, under the title of "Causeries du lundi," did not pledge their author to solve by original researches vexed historical questions. The blame was, therefore, with his readers, rather than with the brilliant essayist himself, if the authority of a decisive judgment was imputed to what he put forward as a personal opinion upon a question of facts he was careful to state he had not made it his business to examine (*il ne saurait être de mon dessein d'examiner ici ce procès*). The same apology, however, does not hold good in the case of Saint-Marc

[1] These letters are found in the *Memoirs*, vol. iii. pp. 70, 71, 73. In the *Confessions*, Part II, liv. ix. In Streckeisen-Moultou's *J. J. Rousseau, ses Amis et ses Ennemis*, vol. i. pp. 341, 342, 343. See also Prof. Ritter's *Nouvelles Recherches sur la Correspondance de J. J. Rousseau.*

Girardin; who, as the author of what professed to be studies upon the Life and Writings of J. J. Rousseau, was bound by the character of his work to acquaint himself with established facts, as well as with all that had been said and written upon the subject. Nevertheless in 1851, that is to say, thirty-one years after Musset Pathay's *Life of Rousseau*, this new biographer entirely ignored all the evidence put forward by his predecessor in proof of the unreliability of the so-called *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* (soit que ces Mémoires ne remplissent aucune des conditions exigées pour constater la certitude, soit parcequ'il y a des faits dont la fausseté est demontrée). Without showing any knowledge of the admissions of the original editor, J. C. Brunet, that the printed volumes given the public represented only those parts of the original narrative that wore an air of probability, and that evidently imaginary and fanciful episodes had been suppressed, Saint-Marc Girardin adopted in his serious biography the same method that Sainte-Beuve had, with much more excuse, followed in the *Causeries*. Trusting to his own personal conviction that Madame d'Epinay was a more trustworthy witness than Rousseau, he took the *Memoirs* in one hand and the *Confessions* in the other, compared the two narratives, reconciled them (when reconciliation was possible) by supposing Rousseau's account tainted by his mania of suspicion; and when the different stories could not be reconciled, when it became evident that one of the two accounts must be false, and that "some one had lied," deciding off-hand that the "liar" was J. J. Rousseau.

It is thus upon no more solid grounds than the assertion "Madame d'Epinay tells a different story" that this biographer rejects as "pure affectation of simplicity and awkwardness," Rousseau's account of his poor performances as an actor in the private theatricals at La Chevrette; his "fairy-tale" about Madame d'Epinay's charming method of offering him the Hermitage; his

"novel" (in other words his own account, given in the *Confessions*), of his romantic passion for Madame d'Houdetot.

But this is not all. Saint-Marc Girardin not only prefers to accept the account given in the *Memoirs* about events differently related in the *Confessions*, for no better reason than his faith in the "essential veracity" of Madame d'Epinay, but, upon the same faith, he bases assertions about Rousseau's life and conduct which are directly contradicted by well-established facts and by the testimony of contemporaries.

Nothing, for instance, is more certain than that Rousseau did practise the trade of a copyist of music seriously; that he supported himself and Thérèse by his earnings; and that without this supplement to the sums paid him at intervals for his books he could not have existed independently of the pensions and patronage that the more prosperous men of letters who sneered at him —Diderot and d'Alembert, to say nothing of Grimm— were constantly ready to accept and even solicit.

Yet, on the faith of the statements of Madame d'Epinay and Grimm, this biographer boldly affirms that when professing to follow the trade of a copyist, Rousseau was an impostor, a charlatan; and that his anger with Grimm, when this professed friend made it his task to decry his skill as a copyist, was not founded upon the real injury done him by depriving him of work he was honestly ready to perform, but was the result of vexation at the exposure of his sham professions to practise any trade but that of a man of letters.

"What afflicted Rousseau," affirmed Saint-Marc Girardin, "was not that Grimm criticized his skill as a workman, but that he put him to shame by exposing him as a humbug."

No fact, again, is more open to proof than Rousseau's true love of independence, and his consistent rejection of substantial benefits and offers of patronage and assistance pressed upon him (as he says himself) with all the

more zeal and persistency because his reluctance to accept favours was notorious. But all these proofs of disinterestedness are ignored; and Saint-Marc Girardin boldly asserts that Rousseau did not refuse favours, but only declined to be grateful for them.

"By way of a commencement Rousseau accepted everything," affirmed his biographer; "services, benefits, carriages. He was, if I may so express it, prodigal in receiving. But on the very next day he began to make up his accounts; and sought to free himself from obligations by resentment against those who had obliged him. His method of recovering independence was ingratitude. Then he realized his poverty and its inconvenience, but only as grievances against others. Thus, with angry emphasis, he told how he had to clean his own boots amongst twenty servants supposed to be at his disposal. Rousseau had in him every type of poverty—the poor man who is shy and awkward, the envious and ungrateful poor man, and the ill-natured and declamatory poor man, a type of recent growth to a great extent created by him."

"Il acceptait tout le premier jour:—services, bienfaits, carrosses; il était prodigue à recevoir: mais dès le lendemain il commençait à faire ses comptes et tâchait de s'acquitter par le mécontentement."

Here is a sentence almost as popular with modern critics of Rousseau as Sainte-Beuve's vigorous phrase describing the author of the *Confessions* as a liar. But here, also, examination into the historical authority for this sentence proves it founded upon an impression derived from demonstrably false assertions made by Madame d'Epinay.

The judgment passed upon Rousseau by E. Scherer has also indubitably its foundations upon belief in the veracity of Madame d'Epinay. Upon Grimm's criticism of Rousseau, or calumnies against Rousseau, in the *Correspondance Littéraire*, E. Scherer has not much to say. "The quarrel," he affirms, "with

Jean Jacques was in 1757. Before that date, in the first volumes of the *Correspondance*, Rousseau is 'the austere and virtuous citizen of Geneva'; but even in this epoch there is no great cordiality of tone, and one recognizes that decidedly there was something of the philistine in the temperament of this critic." But, after the quarrel, "Grimm comes honourably out of this trial of his impartiality, when criticizing a man he had personally to complain of, who had insulted all his old friends with his odious suspicions and Madame d'Epinay with the abominable ingratitude we know."

So much for Grimm, for whom E. Scherer had no immoderate partiality, although his antipathy to Rousseau leads him to give this "French polished German," "*cet Allemand frotté de Français*," the benefit of the doubt in all questions between Jean Jacques and him. But M. Scherer's sincere and devoted admiration for Madame d'Epinay, in the character of a literary connoisseur who has been entertained by her in the epoch when she still held her open salon, outdoes even Sainte-Beuve's sense of the obligation left with all her guests to maintain her essential veracity.

It is thus not so much as a writer who takes up a different point of view from his own, but much more as a *mal élevé*, an offender who sins against the courtesies of polished literary criticism, that poor Paul Boiteau, the editor of a second edition of *Madame d'Epinay's Memoirs* in 1883, is called to account by E. Scherer because he had ventured to convict Madame d'Epinay of different historical inaccuracies.

"M. Boiteau," wrote E. Scherer in his *Études sur la Littérature Contemporaine*, "differs from most editors in that he professes very little esteem for the writer whose work he publishes. If I do not greatly err, all he has had in view when publishing *Madame d'Epinay's Memoirs* has been to sacrifice her to Rousseau. Rousseau one needs to recollect, has his fanatics, who never speak of him without making the sign of the cross, who take

his hallucinations seriously, and who believe in the universal plot of which he imagined himself the victim. M. Boiteau is one of these impassioned apologists. The notes with which he has enriched the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* have often no other object than to justify the calumnies with which the Genevese philosopher paid the affection and benefits of his best friends.[1] Nothing can be more tiresome than this commentary. M. Boiteau has a right to be of any religion that seems good to him, but not to celebrate his faith thus in the public highways. (M. Boiteau a le droit d'être de la réligion qui bon lui semble, mais non pas de célébrer ainsi son culte sur la voie publique.)"

This method of putting an end to the discussion, by refusing to believers in Rousseau's impressive personality and disinterested life the right to profess their faith openly, comes to one as somewhat arbitrary. But it belongs to the temper of mind of a superior critic who arrives at his opinions independently of evidence, by methods of argument. Thus when, between two contradictory theories, he accepts the one that on the face of things appears to him reasonable, and rejects the theory that looks to him extravagant, he is prone to feel impatience with people who undertake superfluous inquiries in connection with a question he esteems is settled.

Very much the same tone is adopted, because the same critical method is employed, by Rousseau's English biographer. But it is characteristic of the different intellectual temperaments of French and English critics, that Mr. John Morley does not at all share the enthusiasm of Sainte-Beuve and E. Scherer for Madame d'Epinay, and that he has a very qualified belief in the lady's "essential veracity." His own doctrine of Rousseau's repulsive personality is much more the result of the impression made upon him by the "positivity and

[1] That is to say, the best friends of Rousseau were, in E. Scherer's opinion, the authors of the *Essay upon Seneca*, of the *Correspondance Littéraire*, and of the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay*.

firmness" he discovers as the leading characteristics of the "coldly upright" editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire.*

"Grimm," affirms Mr. Morley, "was an able and helpful man, in spite of his having a rough manner, powdering his face, and being so monstrously scented as to earn the name of the musk bear. He had the firmness and positivity which are not always beautiful but of which there is probably too little, rather than too much, in the world, certainly in the France of his time and of which there was none at all in Rousseau. Above all things, he hated declamation. It is easy to see how Rousseau's way of ordering himself would gradually estrange so hard a head as this. It is possible that jealousy may have stimulated the exercise of his natural shrewdness.[1] But this shrewdness, added to entire want of imagination and a very narrow range of sympathy, was quite enough to account for Grimm's harsh judgment, without attributing to him sinister motives. . . . The characters of the two men were profoundly antipathetic. Rousseau we know: [?] sensuous, impulsive, extravagant, with little sense of the difference between reality and dream. Grimm was exactly the opposite, judicious, collected, self-seeking, coldly upright. After being secretary to several high people, he became the literary correspondent of various German sovereigns, keeping them informed of what was happening in the world of art and letters, just as an ambassador keeps his Government informed of what happens in politics. *The sobriety, impartiality and discrimination of his criticism makes one think highly of his literary judgment. This is not all, however; his criticism is conceived in a tone that impresses us with the writer's integrity.*"[2]

In so far as his opinion of Jean Jacques Rousseau's private character is concerned, a critic who comes away

[1] Jealousy of Madame d'Epinay is what Mr. Morley intends.
[2] Vol. i. p. 280.

from the *Correspondance Littéraire* impressed by Grimm's integrity, holds the same doctrine as critics who believe in the essential veracity of the portraits of historical personages given in the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay.*

And here we have what really constitutes the fundamental argument that serves as the starting-point of the psychological criticism of Rousseau.

Considered as a sound argument, it is unanswerable. We are bound to admit, in view of the agreement between the portrait of Rousseau found in Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs*, and the description of him elaborated in innumerable anecdotes and criticisms in Grimm's secret Journal, that one of two conclusions forces itself upon us. Either Rousseau actually was the repulsive personage shown us in both these pictures, and then the resemblance between these separate portraits is explained naturally; or, if the picture did not resemble him, inasmuch as these different authors could not have accidentally hit upon precisely the same falsehoods, Grimm, Madame d'Epinay, and Diderot were not only calumniators, but conspirators; who must have consulted and plotted together to destroy an innocent man's reputation.

But the last conclusion is pronounced untenable by literary critics, who try historical questions by methods of argument, and decide them in accordance with their own impressions and convictions of what it seems reasonable to suppose true.

If, then, the case be settled in this sense, Jean Jacques remains proved to have been the repulsive personage all these separate witnesses described.

But we have now to see how different are the conclusions reached when, discarding arguments about what it seems reasonable to suppose, we make it our task, by an attentive examination of evidence, to arrive at an accurate knowledge of the historical facts.

PART II

THE HISTORICAL INQUIRY

The Plot, and the two Instruments of the Plot, to create for Rousseau a false Reputation.

The Memoirs; and the Literary Correspondence.

Documentary Proofs that the book called *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* represents the Instrument designed and used to carry down this false history of Rousseau to posterity.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGINS OF THE *MEMOIRS* AND INTO THE AUTHORITY OF THE CLAIMS MADE FOR THIS WORK

ALTHOUGH the campaign of the nineteenth-century editors against the verdict passed upon J. J. Rousseau by his contemporaries commenced with the publication of Grimm's Literary Correspondence, there are several reasons why our own inquiry should begin with an examination into the origins and history of Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs.*

Here is the first reason: The action of the editor of *Correspondance Littéraire* as Rousseau's secret calumniator and persecutor, is most sensationally evident during the period of five years, 1762 to 1767; when the author of *Emile,* actively and openly persecuted by the French and Swiss Governments, was secretly pursued step by step along the path of his misfortunes by the calumnies circulated by Grimm, amongst Sovereigns, influential statesmen, and men of leading in the different courts of Europe; in such a way as to rob the exiled fugitive author of sympathy and protection.

But before this epoch of persecutions, we have the still more important epoch of six years, from 1756 to 1762, spent by Rousseau at Montmorency, when all his greatest books were produced. What was his true behaviour, what was his moral and mental state, in the years when he produced the *Lettre à d'Alembert,* the *Nouvelle Héloïse,* the *Contrat Social,* and *Emile?* Upon our correct knowledge here depends our acceptance, or rejection, of the theory that an impostor led a return to nature; that an impure man purified morals

and revived the sentiment of romantic love; that a morbid and ferocious maniac laid the foundations of modern educational and social systems, and in every domain of human life, sowed ideas that in every case have come to flower.

And this correct knowledge of Rousseau's mental and moral state during these important years largely depends upon whether we have a truthful story, or a libellous legend, handed down to us in Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs.*

Nor is this the only reason why our new criticism should commence with the examination of the *Memoirs.* It will be recollected that at the outset of this work my claim was, not only that the accepted doctrine of Rousseau's character was a false doctrine, but also that it had for its foundation an audacious historical fraud. The clue that leads up to the exposure of this fraud is obtained through the discovery and comparative study of three different manuscripts of Madame d'Epinay's work—manuscripts at the present hour entombed in blue cardboard cases, and packed away safely on "reserve" shelves in three public libraries in Paris. By the aid of these yellow pages, of these faded characters, that, when the revelations they silently bring are borne in on one, dazzle one as with excess of clearness, a flood of light is let into the dark chamber. We see the Conspirators without their masks. We watch them fabricating their fraudulent document; we trace their arrangements for its concealment; and we discover in what hour it is to be produced. And, later on, we see the one surviving Conspirator, in the perilous days of the Revolution, hurriedly and resolutely, and certainly, at the risk of his life, carrying through, before his flight from France, the measures necessary to secure the production after his death of his testament of vengeance.

But before arriving at the revelations disclosed by the manuscripts, we have to sum up what was known before my own discoveries of the history of the printed *Memoirs.*

It has been seen that J. C. Brunet's quotation of the writer in the *Biographie Universelle* in support of his assertion that Madame d'Epinay's contemporaries knew she had written the *Memoirs* of her life, only proves that this writer (Laporte) knew of the existence of the manuscript which, three years later, Brunet published. All the evidence we have, on the contrary, and especially the negative evidence afforded by Grimm's silence, and the silence of his friends, after Ginguené's Letters, points to the fact that for thirty-two years after Madame d'Epinay's death (April, 1783), and for thirty-five years after the death of the author of the *Confessions* (1778), the secret of this posthumous work was jealously kept; and that no knowledge, or suspicion, of the existence of any reply made by Madame d'Epinay to J. J. Rousseau has ever been traced home to any of their contemporaries. The only allusion to a document that in 1782 must have been in course of preparation, is found in a sentence of Diderot's—meaningless, or enigmatical, to his contemporaries—but that, in the light of future events, we can now discover had a prophetic significance. In Diderot's maledictory note against Rousseau added on to his *Essay upon Seneca* (Second Edition, 1782), we find this phrase following after the assertion that, when covering with opprobrious terms the name of a dead man, who during his lifetime he had been in the way of calling his "old friend," Diderot considered he was accomplishing a sacred duty.

"If I did not fulfil this duty earlier," wrote Diderot, "if even here and now, I do not give full details, and unanswerable facts, several of Rousseau's defenders know my reasons and approve of them, and I would name them without hesitation [1] if it were possible for them to defend themselves without criminal indiscretions. But Rousseau himself, in a posthumous work where he has just declared himself to be mad, proud, a hypocrite,

[1] Diderot probably means by Rousseau's defenders Saint-Lambert and Madame d'Houdetot.

and a liar,[1] has raised a corner of the veil; time will complete the work, and justice will be dealt out to the dead, when it can be executed without afflicting the living. (Le temps achevra: et justice sera faite du mort, lorsqu'on le pourra, sans affliger les vivants.)"

Amongst the persons implicated in the story of Rousseau's rupture with his old friends, well acquainted with the true circumstances and who were still living in 1782, we find that, Madame d'Epinay died in 1783; Diderot and d'Alembert in 1784; Deleyre (Rousseau's old friend also, and who would not have let calumnies against him pass without contradiction) died in 1797; the Baron d'Holbach in 1789; Saint-Lambert in 1803; Grimm himself in 1807; and, last of all, *the person most competent to take Jean Jacques' defence in connection with a story where his devotion to her was the first cause of his misfortunes, Madame d'Houdetot, died, at eighty-six years of age, in* 1813.

The notice upon Madame d'Epinay in the *Biographie Universelle* in 1815 establishes (if we allow due time for the perusal of the manuscript and the production of the article) that the persons who had been made the depositories of this secret document must have offered it for sale immediately after the death of Madame d'Houdetot.

Although the *Memoirs* were accepted in good faith by the public at large, and by literary connoisseurs who admired the book as a masterpiece of psychological insight, historical critics, from the first, protested against the endeavour to claim for Madame d'Epinay's narrative (arranged for publication by J. C. Brunet) the authority of serious testimony in the disputed case between the Encyclopædists and Rousseau.

Thus, in the same year that the *Memoirs* were published, Musset Pathay in his *Anecdotes Inédites*

[1] It is needless to say that in no posthumous work did Rousseau declare himself any of these things.

pour faire suite aux Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay[1] insisted upon the fact that this book could not be accepted from the hands of its editors as a trustworthy autobiography of the authoress ; inasmuch as many familiar facts of Madame d'Epinay's own life, and of the lives of her friends and relatives, were misrepresented ; and the whole story of her relations with Rousseau was sown with patent inaccuracies. Moreover, Musset Pathay pointed out that readers of the printed volume were not able to form a correct opinion of the original work in manuscript, which the editors themselves admitted had been arranged by them for publication.

"When making these researches," wrote Musset Pathay,[2] "we become painfully conscious that we are only dealing with the printed book, and that all we know about the original manuscript is what the editor has been pleased to tell us. But even so, what he does say suffices to put the reader on his guard. The editor admits that he has restored to the personages of the novel the real names which the author had disguised. So then the *Memoirs* have undergone important alterations. Or, rather, the title of *Memoirs* has been given to an extract from a novel."

Here was a serious challenge that could have been taken up by the editor satisfactorily in one way only. Evidently what J. C. Brunet had to do, in order to prove that he had not made important alterations in the original work, was to invite his critic to compare the

[1] "Voiçi les motifs pour lesquels on peut croire que Madame d'Epinay n'est point l'auteur des Mémoires qui portent son nom. Elle écrit avec inexactitude des localités et des personnes qu'elle connaissait parfaitement. Elle avouait ses galanteries et accusait son mari d'improbité. On dit, et l'éditeur répète, que Rousseau avait assez longtemps parlé seul sans sa propre cause : qui donc empêcha Grimm et Madame d'Epinay de parler dans les leurs ? Tous deux ont survécu à Rousseau—Tous deux sont morts sans dire un mot. On sent bien que dans cette récherche nous n'avons à notre disposition que les Mémoires imprimés et que nous ne savons sur les pièces originales que ce que l'éditeur veut bien nous en dire."

[2] See *Anecdotes Inédites.*

printed book with the manuscript he still had in his possession.

J. C. Brunet did *not*, however, take this course. On the contrary, with conspicuous mildness, he contented himself with the reply that his critic "committed an error" when accusing him of editorial dishonesty!

"The *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay*," wrote J. C. Brunet, in a new edition of the *Manuel du Libraire*, "were published by us in 1818 with the assistance, and after the revision of the late M. Parison,[1] our regretted friend, and were reprinted three times in less than six months. In connection with this book should be mentioned a pamphlet entitled '*Anecdotes inédites pour faire suite aux Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay*' preceded by an examination of the *Memoirs*. The writer of this pamphlet commits an error when he contests the authenticity of the *Memoirs* and even of the letters from Rousseau, of which we possess the originals.[2] *No doubt Madame d'Epinay, who gave her work the form of a novel, did not always keep strictly to the exact facts* (*ne s'est pas toujours renfermée dans la stricte exactitude des faits*), but the editor having cut out what appeared to him purely imaginary adornments has kept, *without altering them*,[3] all the parts of the narrative that wore an air of probability. And it is perhaps this treatment which explains the success of this singular autobiography."

Here, we recognize a serious abatement of the claim originally put forward for a work that was to throw new light upon Rousseau's suspicions of his old friends, and to correct his *Confessions*—but whose authoress is now admitted "to have not always kept strictly to facts."

Musset Pathay, not satisfied with these concessions, returned two years later to the "error" inconsistently condemned by Brunet, and at the same time recognized by him as true. In his *Life of Rousseau* Musset Pathay again denied the historical character of this work.

"M. Brunet," wrote Rousseau's most careful

[1] [2] See Appendix, Note D D, vol. i. p. 385. [3] See page 110.

biographer, "has published, under the title of *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay*, a work that will always be read with pleasure, *but which cannot be classed with historical memoirs, both because it has no title deeds of authenticity, and because it contains demonstrably false statements.*"

Very much the same judgment was pronounced in 1863, by Paul Boiteau, who brought out a second edition of the *Memoirs*, enriched with those notes and commentaries that drew down upon him the reprobation of E. Scherer.[1] In so far as the text is concerned, Boiteau's edition was a literal reproduction of the original edition published in 1818. And the reason was evident. J. C. Brunet was still alive in 1863, and the possessor of the only manuscript then known to exist. Boiteau says he was permitted to see a great part of it. But it is clear he was not allowed to see the part that would have enabled him to convict his predecessor of having falsified the text he professed to have reproduced literally. Boiteau, however, like Musset Pathay, took the trouble of comparing the narrative told by Madame d'Epinay with contemporary records; and his notes show the numerous mis-statements and inaccuracies of this "singular autobiography." Also the conclusion reached by Boiteau is the same as the one pronounced by Musset Pathay: that the title of *Memoirs* has been wrongly given to a work correctly described by Grimm as a long novel.

"In these so called *Memoirs*," wrote Boiteau, "what we really have is a collection of letters, of fragments of a journal, of dialogues between personages with imaginary names, the whole put into shape by an able and a judicious editor, well up in the history of the time; and who has cleverly made out of this 'sketch of a long novel' a work full of interest, but one to which we must not go for the truth, because the principal personages concerned had no interest in telling it. One

[1] See page 63.

can only admire the cunning of Grimm, who, when preserving the document that came into his possession after Madame d'Epinay's death, called it the sketch of a long novel. By this language he sheltered himself from all responsibility. If the facts related in the story were doubted, he was free to pretend he had no share in the work; but he calculated, and rightly enough, that in spite of his warning the story would be taken literally, because people are always inclined to believe evil of others."

Here then, in so far as the historical criticism of the *Memoirs* went, the question remained until, in 1883, MM. Lucien Perey and Gaston Maugras, authors of *La Jeunesse et les Dernières Années de Madame d'Epinay*, certified their discovery (as a result of information given them by M. Maurice Tourneux, the accomplished critic and littérateur who has so successfully edited the collected works of Diderot and the *Correspondance Littéraire* of Grimm) of a new manuscript of Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs*, divided between the libraries of the Archives and Arsenal.

"As a result of what vicissitudes," inquire these authors, in their preface, "was the division of this manuscript brought about? How does it happen that one part fell to the share of the Archives, and that the other is found at the Arsenal, classified amongst Diderot's papers? One thing only is certain; and it is that the whole work was seized at Grimm's house when it was pillaged in 1793."

We shall presently discover that a good deal more than this may be predicted as certain about this manuscript. MM. Perey and Maugras, however, felt, evidently, little interest in inquiries that would have had for their results the re-opening of the "eternal discussion about Rousseau," which these writers hold it is time to make an end of, by admitting that he was a frightful character.[1] In connection with the early history

[1] See p. 12.

of Madame d'Epinay's heroine, these critics have reproduced some very interesting and valuable portions of her work suppressed by the first editors. But they have added nothing, in the way of fresh information, or helpful criticism, which throws new light upon the true story of Madame d'Epinay's attitude towards J. J. Rousseau. On the contrary, following the bad example of their predecessor, Brunet, they have ignored the testimony of facts, when making positive affirmations that cannot stand the test of inquiry, nor of exposure to the light of evidence.

"We declare," these writers seriously affirm, "that after the most exact and conscientious work, we have arrived at a firm belief in the veracity of the *Memoirs*, upon all essential points."

This sentence occurs in the preface to their first volume. In the preface to their second volume, MM. Perey and Maugras repeat even more emphatically these asseverations.

"As we have been led to speak of the *Memoirs*," they pronounce, "we take the opportunity of once more affirming their veracity. It is difficult to believe the extent to which Madame d'Epinay has been the slave of truth. Every time that chance has brought under our eyes, whether in our autograph documents, or in public collections, the history of a fact related by Madame d'Epinay, *we have been able to convince ourselves of the perfect exactitude of her narrative.* The passionate denials of Musset Pathay and of other persons can have no power against undeniable facts; besides, the evident object of Musset Pathay was to glorify Rousseau at the expense of Madame d'Epinay."

One would not like to say that the evident object of MM. Perey and Maugras was to justify Madame d'Epinay and Grimm, at the expense of Rousseau. But what can be safely declared, *because it is capable of proof*, is that what these writers describe as their "most exact and conscientious work" did not include the very

necessary precaution of acquainting themselves with facts of public knowledge in connection with the subject upon which they professed to be passing the judgment of specialists. Thus it was in 1865 that M. Streckeisen-Moultou had published from the original autographs preserved at Neuchatel, the true letters of Madame d'Epinay, of Rousseau, of Diderot, and of Grimm, written in 1757, that are given differently in the *Memoirs* and in the *Confessions*.[1] This publication established, once and for ever, that Rousseau has reproduced these letters correctly, and that those given in the *Memoirs* are forgeries. In 1883, that is to say, *eighteen years after the blunder had become unpardonable in any critic professing an authoritative opinion upon this subject*, MM. Perey and Maugras reproduced these forgeries as genuine letters.

In other words, the declarations and affirmations of these writers about the veracity of the *Memoirs* did not possess the authority that would have belonged to them could one have reconciled with the proofs of their neglect to acquaint themselves with evidence open to all the world, their claim to the most exact and conscientious original researches in connection with unknown autograph documents and unexplored manuscripts in public collections.

But did the second manuscript of the *Memoirs* employed by MM. Perey and Maugras afford any evidence of an unexplained character to justify the declarations and affirmations of these writers in connection with their belief in the veracity of the work?

Here was the question as it presented itself to me before my examination of the manuscripts had commenced. The careful study I had made of the *Correspondance Littéraire* had convinced me that this was the chief instrument of the Conspirators used in Rousseau's life-time to injure his fame, not only in France, but throughout Europe. I had reached the conclusion, too,

[1] See page 59.

that the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* was the second instrument of this plot; and that its publication immediately after the death of Madame d'Houdetot proved that some arrangements must have been made to hold the document concealed, and to publish it only when all contemporaries had died. But whilst the conclusion about the *Correspondance Littéraire* was based upon evidence I was able to throw open to examination with entire confidence that every one who verified it must arrive at one decision—in the case of the *Memoirs*, my own conviction was the result of a collection of scattered facts and statements, needing to be weighed and considered in relation to each other; facts that, although they were entirely convincing to me, I knew would not convince (but would rather predispose to the opinion that I was a "fanatic," ready to take up with extravagant theories) the average fair-minded reader; who had not become familiar, as I had done in the labour of years spent in disentangling their secret methods and systems, with the almost incredible industry, patience and talent, devoted by these self-styled honest men, to the task of creating a false J. J. Rousseau. What I needed and what at this time I did not possess, and, to tell the truth, had very little hope of discovering, was—1st, positive evidence that the Conspirators, Grimm and Diderot, had taken an active part in constructing the history of Rousseau handed down in Madame d'Epinay's posthumous book; 2nd, patent proofs that Grimm's description of this work as the "sketch of a long novel," and his neglect to publish it, concealed the design to hold the work back, and secure its publication, when no one was left to defend Rousseau against his calumniators.

But could positive evidence, or patent proofs, be found in a case where the Conspirators had every motive for destroying all outward signs of their operations?

Here was the position I had reached when, by what may be described as a happy accident, one day, when

I was expecting no sensational discovery of any sort, in the small Reading Room of the Paris Archives the talisman came into my hand which enables me to elucidate this mystery.

And here, for the encouragement of other travellers by the arduous path of historical research, I may be allowed to record my own experience. It is that the explorer in these domains has to bear in mind the same rule that gave success to the lucky traveller in old fairy tales. The youngest brother, in the story, succeeds in his quest where his predecessors failed: he lodges at precisely the right inn where puts up the owner of the magic sword; he meets at rest on the particular mile-stone the pedlar who sells him the shoes of swiftness; he passes the one orchard in the land where ripen the only apples that can heal the king's daughter of her sickness—all this, and much more than all this, because, unlike his elder brothers, he has known how to close his ears against tempters who have sought to lure him from the steep road.

The "steep road" in the domains of historical research signifies the exploration of original documents. Every one who has travelled by it knows the fatigues by the way; and the temptation to listen to counsellors who persuade one that the toil need not be taken, that the work of exploration has been done before, and done completely; and that all points of interest have been noted down, and stand recorded in agreeable and easily-read printed volumes. But the explorer whose purpose is not to pass time pleasantly in well-worn byeways, but seriously to pursue his quest after historical facts, must not listen to these counsels. Let him persevere, and tread the steep road himself, attentive to every bend and turn in it; trusting to no accounts given him, but verifying all that comes under his observation as an independent inquirer, who renders his own account of things, unknown before he had examined them, and that must yield up their secret to him, before he passes on.

And following this method, the chances are all in his favour that the good luck of the hero of the fairy tale will befall him also! For, dull and tedious though the steep road of original historical research may for long periods appear, it is nevertheless a path sown with romantic surprises. Upon any day, the traveller by it may arrive unexpectedly at the Hostelry of Good Adventure. At any hour, he may pick up, without searching for it, some stray object, neglected by all who have gone before him, but that excites his curiosity; and, handling it for the first time in the right way, discover that he has come into possession of the talisman which will transport him where he needs to go, or call up around him ghosts from a vanished world, and compel them to answer his questions.

To just such an adventure as this do I owe the discoveries which enable me to give for the first time the true history of Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs*, and to find, as the starting-point and justification of the new criticism of Rousseau, what I had so long been in search of, viz. the patent and sensational proof of the conspiracy against him, which modern critics assume existed only as "a spectre of his diseased imagination."

CHAPTER II

THE ARCHIVES AND ARSENAL MANUSCRIPTS

Archives, M. 789, *Lettres de Madame de Montbrillant.*
Arsenal, 3158. 260 bis, B. F., *Histoire de Madame de Rambure.*

It will be already understood, that the inquiry which had for its results this important discovery, was the examination of the manuscript which MM. Perey and Maugras profess to have carefully and conscientiously studied.

What I expected to find by the personal investigation of these documents was, at most, that the positive affirmations and declarations of these writers about the veracity of the *Memoirs* were based upon insufficient evidence. What I *did* find, was that they were made in defiance of a fact that must force itself upon the attention of every investigator with good eyesight, who looks through the separate folios of this manuscript—the fact, namely, *that this document has quite patently been tampered with: and that, especially the whole story of René (of Rousseau) as it stands to-day in the manuscript—and as it stands also in the printed edition of the Memoirs—is an interpolation that has been substituted for an earlier history suppressed.*

This preliminary discovery is so unavoidably the result of examining the manuscript called *Lettres de Madame de Montbrillant* possessed by the Archives Library, that a simple description of the documents (assisted by the facsimiles of handwritings reproduced at pages 87 to 94) will suffice to convince the reader that we are dealing with evidence that demands only good faith

upon the part of an investigator, once put in possession of it, to lead to inevitable conclusions about its significance.

The manuscripts divided between these two public libraries[1] consist of a hundred and eighty-five small "cahiers" of the size of an ordinary school copybook, without the cover. The pages of each cahier are tied together with a small favour of blue ribbon. A hundred and forty cahiers make up the Archives Manuscript; and in the blue cardboard case containing it is found a loose sheet of paper, undated, giving what must be recognized as a most uncertain account of the original acquisition of the manuscript. Here is a literal translation of this document.

M. 789.[2]

"Letters of Madame de Montbrillant—or Picture of Manners in the Eighteenth Century—a note found with this manuscript, *sent, it appears, by the National Assembly, or by the Convention, to the Committee of Public Instruction*,[3] gives in the following order the names of the most remarkable personages who are here put forward.

Monsieur and Madame	Monsieur and Madame
De Montbrillant	d'Epinay
De Lange	d'Houdetot
Desbarres	Duclos
René	J. J. Rousseau
Garnier	Diderot
Volx	Grimm

"One reads in the middle of a page in the 31st cahier, in a letter of one of the principal personages: 'I beg them' (that is to say, the critics of this work) 'to

[1] The Archives, Rue des Francs Bourgeois; the Arsenal Library, Rue de Sully, Paris.

[2] Reference to the Catalogue of the Archives Library.

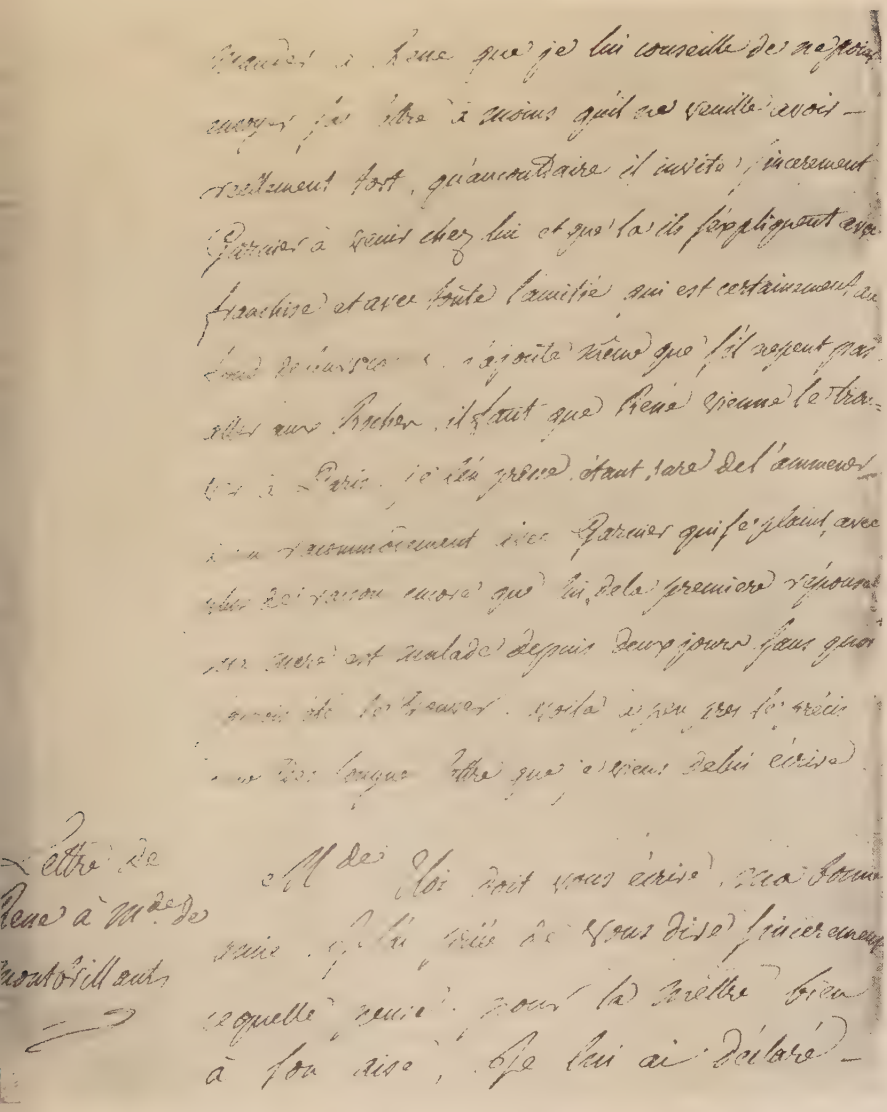
[3] See page 99.

recollect throughout that this is not a novel I am giving to the public, but the true memoirs of a family; and of several societies made up of men and women subject to the weaknesses that belong to human nature.'"

Coming now to the facts that, as I have said, must force themselves upon the attention of every person gifted with good eyesight who examines the Archives Manuscript, the last fifty cahiers of the collection reveal unmistakable signs of having been not only altered, but to a great extent re-written; and in a different hand to the delicate and irregular one that meanders evenly across the yellow pages of the first ninety cahiers. It is not as though the original handwriting broke off at the ninetieth cahier, leaving the story to the new-comer; but this new-comer is plainly an intruder, who interrupts the original narrative, that still flows on evenly, except when the bolder, coarser hand breaks in, in interpolated passages, on pages pasted in, to take the place of pages that have evidently been cut out; or in long marginal notes, or in passages written over the fainter writing barred out. And the intrusion of this handwriting always means mischief. Once having entered into the manuscript, like a malicious scandal-monger into a society of amiable people, this blacker pen is busy henceforth, sowing spiteful anecdotes in side notes, writing cynical reflections upon tender speeches, inserting indecent or blasphemous remarks in witty dialogues—but, especially, showing up as hypocritical impostors and mercenary schemers, the agreeable and entertaining people who had before been presented to us as Madame de Montbrillant's best friends.

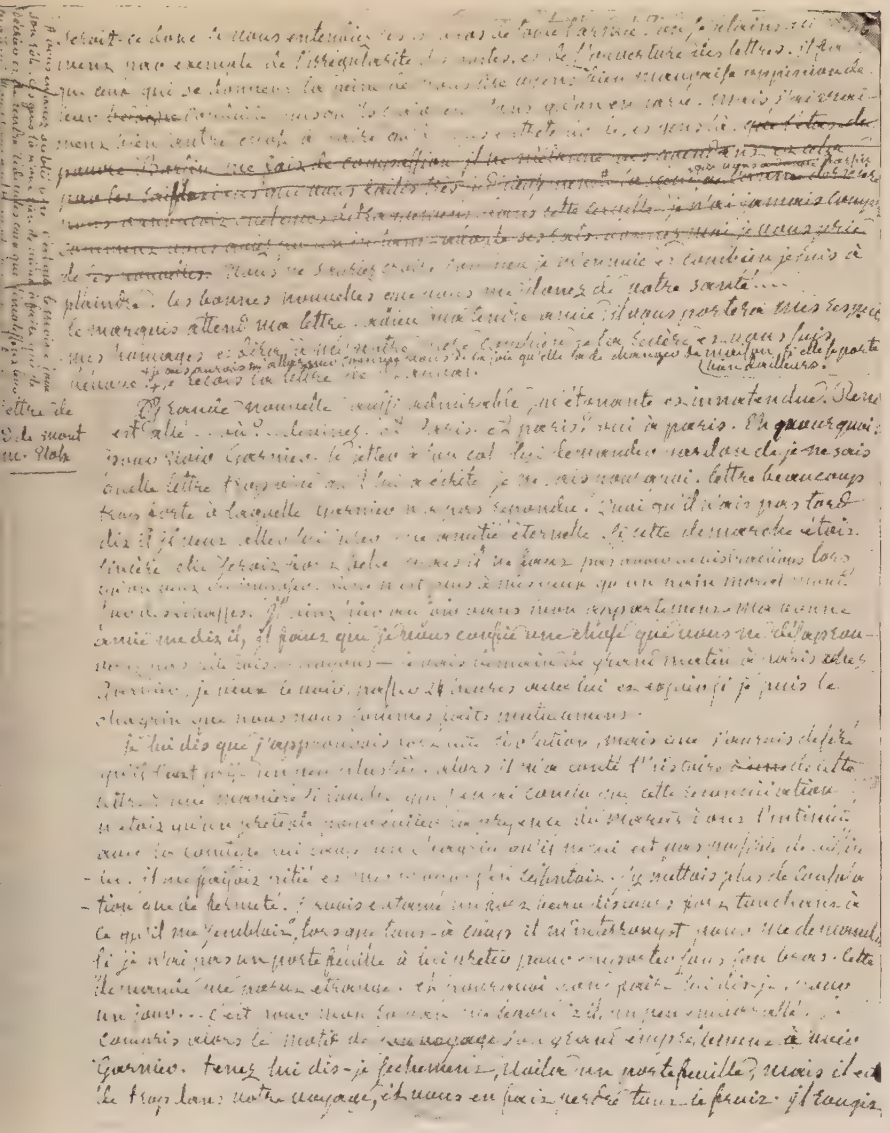
But it is especially with René's entrance into the story that the malice of this hand becomes evident; so soon as this name appears, an interruption of the original narrative is certain to follow; the scandalous pen dips itself into blacker ink, and writes down, or bars out, the delicate pale writing, which, nevertheless, we can still

SPECIMEN OF HANDWRITING OF THE ORIGINAL NARRATIVE

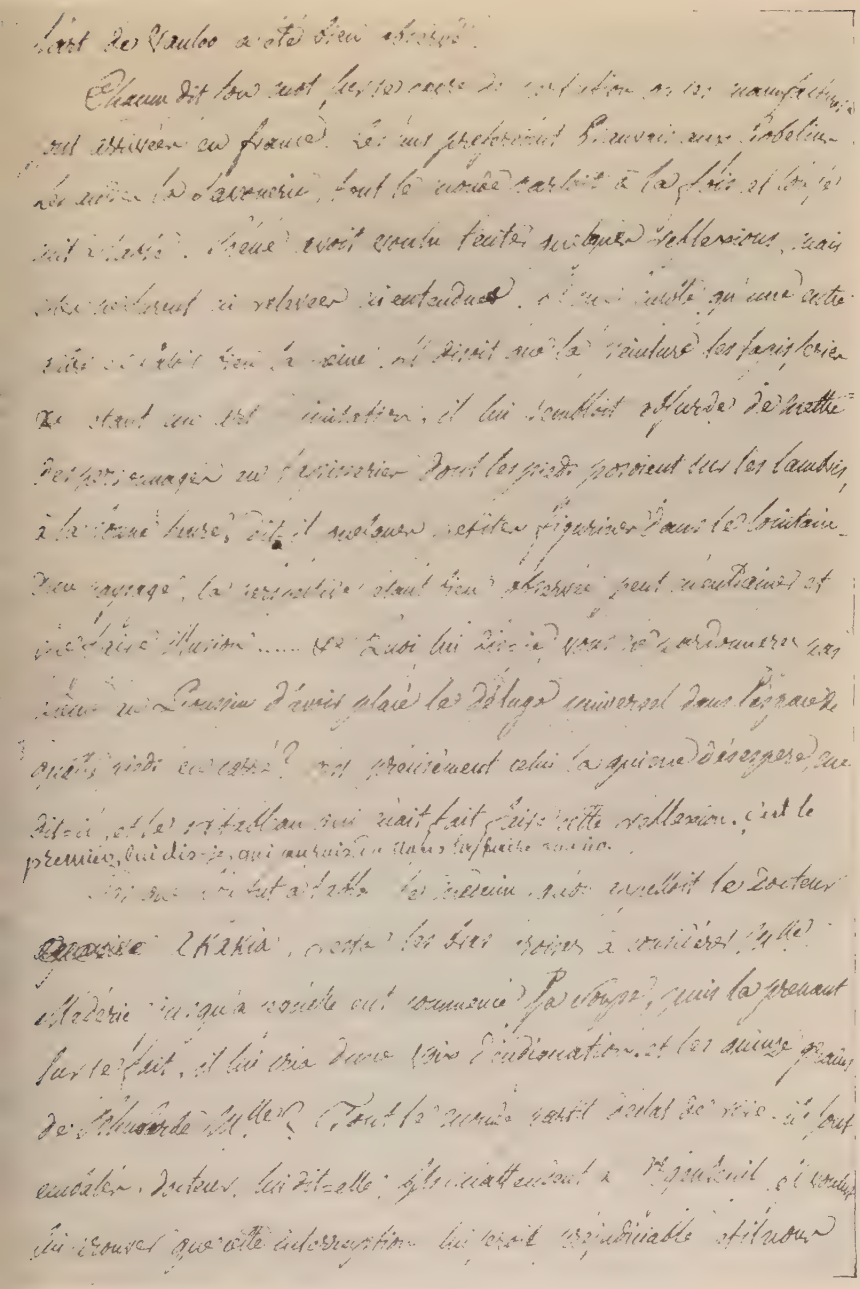


Facsimile of the handwriting (No. 1) of the original unaltered manuscript. This page is reproduced from the 2nd cahier of the Archives MS. It is a passage from a letter where Madame d'Epinay makes the heroine relate faithfully her own efforts to soothe Rousseau's anger after Diderot's offensive letters to him early in 1757. (For episode see p. 227, vol. i, *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay.*)

SPECIMEN OF THE HANDWRITING OF THE ALTERED STORY

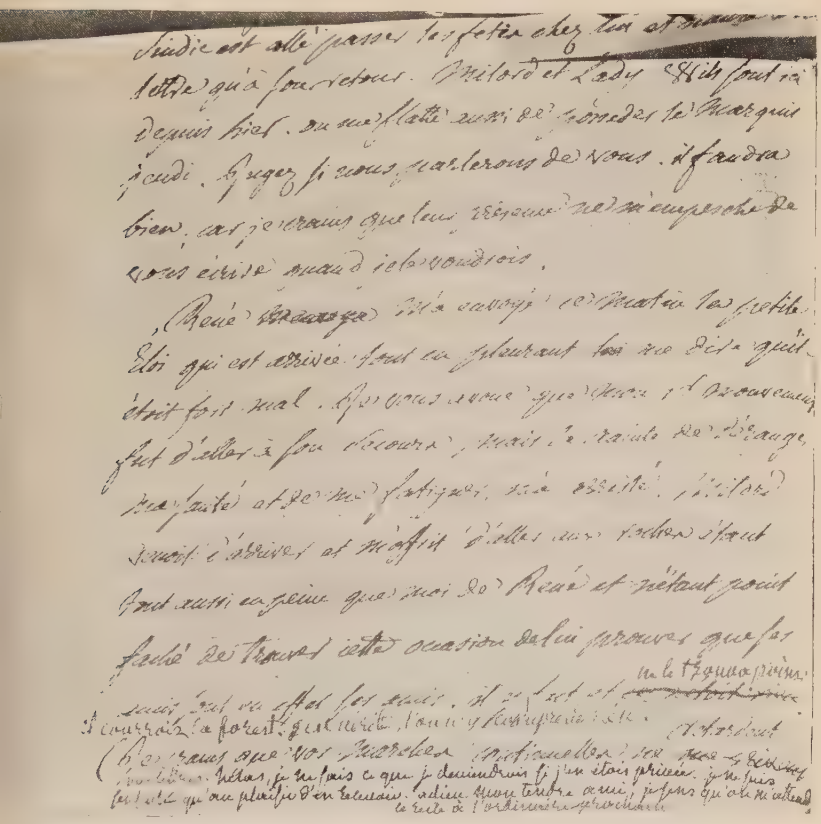


Facsimile of handwriting (No. 2) which alters and re-writes the story of "René." This page is from the 140th ...ier,' Archives MS. The cahier has been re-written with the purpose of arranging the story of Rousseau's ...posed selfishness and treachery to Diderot, as related in the Tablets. (For incident see vol. ii. pp. 24, 25.)



ge of original narrative in handwriting No. 1, showing an interpolated sentence in handwriting No. 2. The is reproduced from the 107th cahier of the Archives MS. The purpose of the interpolated sentence is to add the original harmless and simple account of René's opinions an insinuation that he was disrespectfully bed by the heroine for conceit and his "bizarre theories."

SPECIMEN OF EARLY INTERPOLATIONS IN THE ORIGINAL NARRATIVE

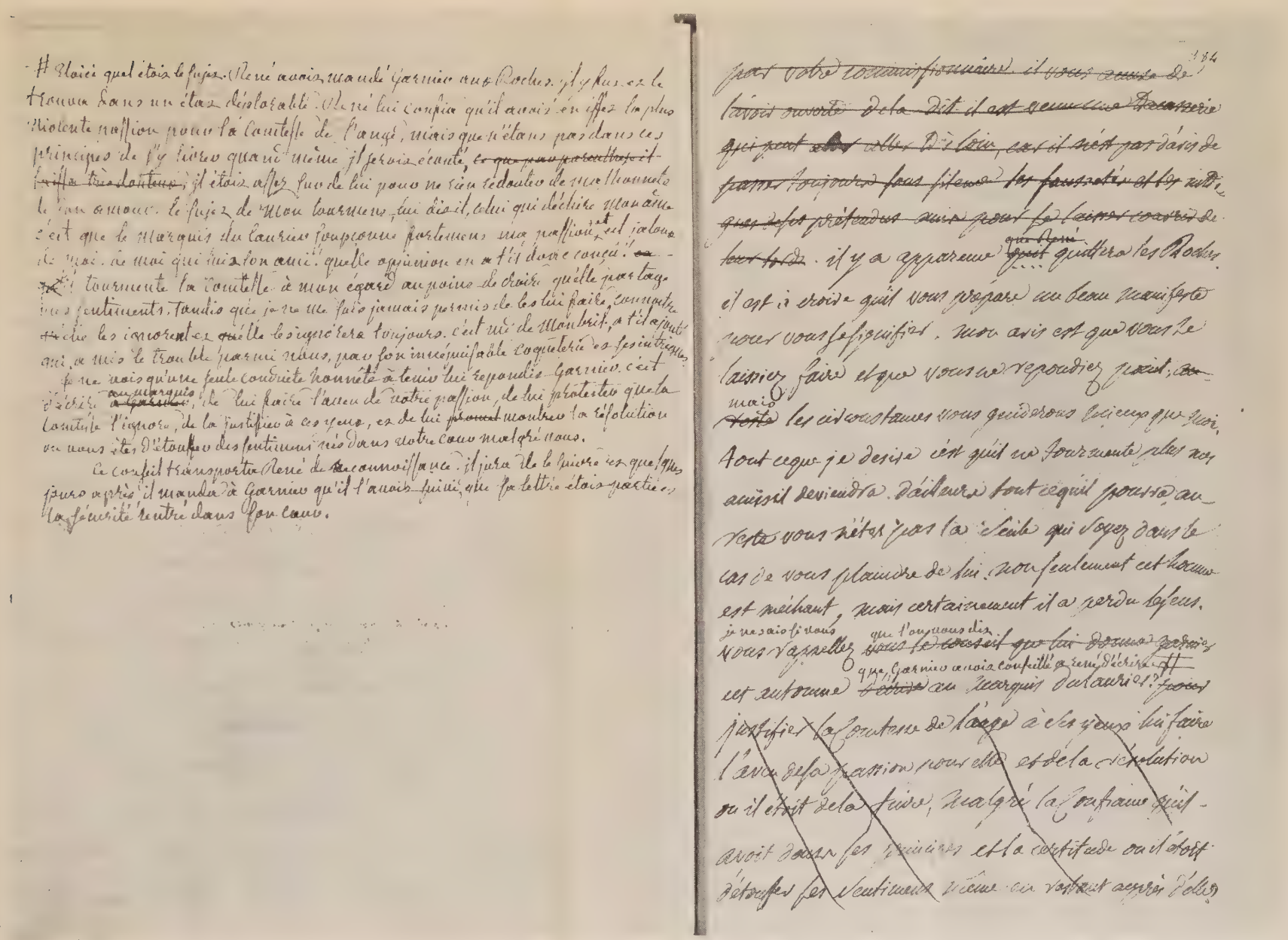


Page of original narrative in handwriting No. 1, showing an interpolated sentence in handwriting No. 2. is page is reproduced from a loose page of an old cahier that has been replaced by an entirely re-written hier, 138, in handwriting No. 2. The original narrative given in the suppressed cahier must have related ferently the behaviour both of the heroine and of his other friends to René, who in the *Memoirs* treat n with ridicule and disdain. The interpolated sentence applies to René's forest ramblings with the untess, and his effort to conceal his proceedings from his hostess.

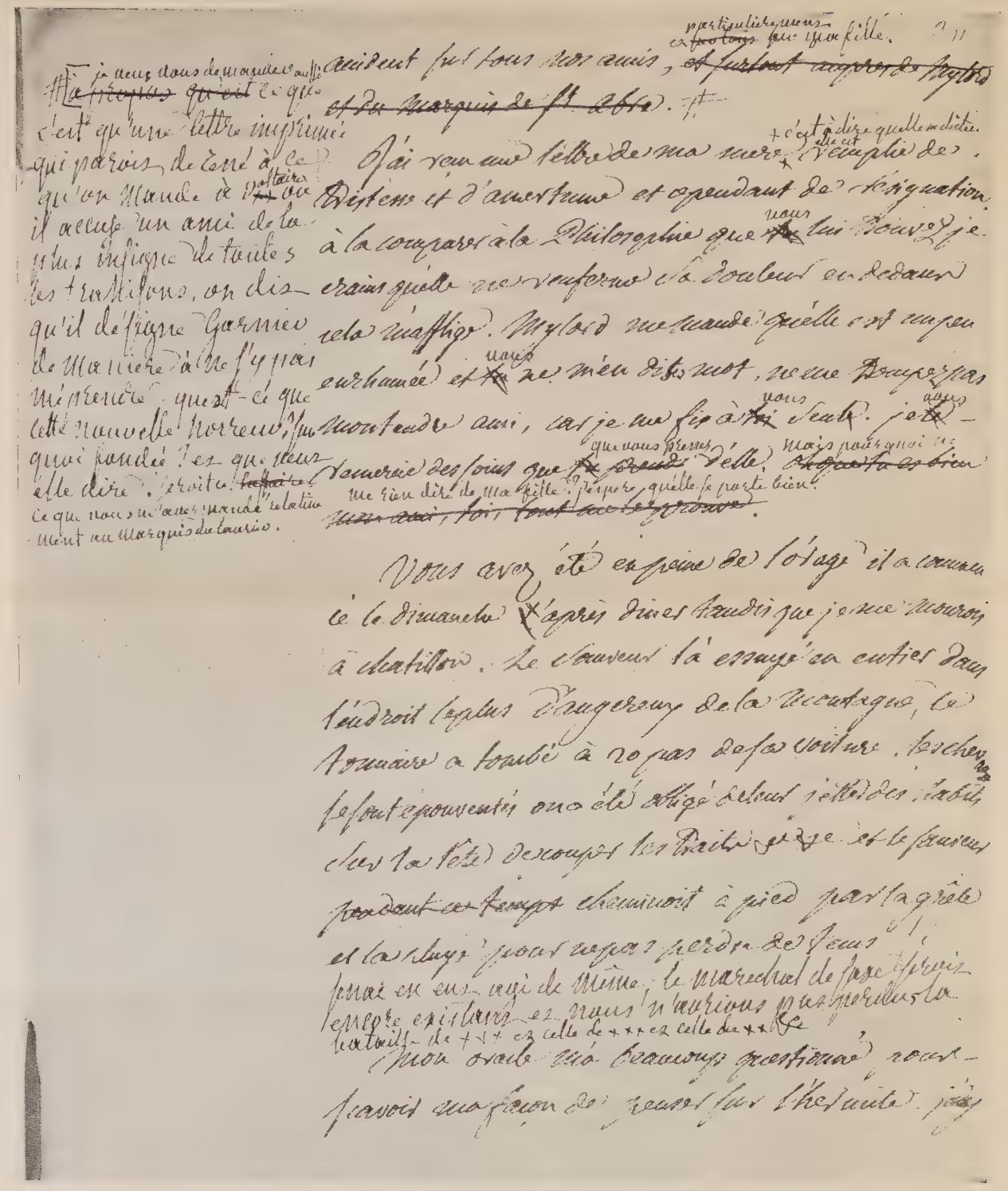
j'espère que vous n'aurez pas parlé [la première] au marquis de Saintabre [de] de la scène qui s'est passée chez vous, et que vous ne lui aurez rien demandé au sujet de son valet et de celui de Bonnard. Qu'il en résulte tout ce qu'on voudra, le seul parti est le silence. Que pourrez vous demander, qu'il [vous] leur défende de se faire? c'est leur montrer qu'on met de l'importance à leur opinion et à leur bavardage. leur expliquer que vous n'avez pas tord? ce serait vous avilir. c'est une folie, mon amie, de vouloir arrêter les bavards ni [empêcher] Dirigez leurs propos. il n'y a qu'une seule façon de ne les point craindre et de ne s'en point embarrasser, c'est de ne point donner de prise à la censure. croyez que quand elle est totalement injuste, elle fait peu d'effet. personne n'est plus fait que nous pour ne la point redouter, il ne s'agit pour cela que de ne pas aller trop vite et nous donner le temps de la réflexion. si nous m'assurez bien que notre santé et celle de Pauline ne se ressentiront pas davantage de cette aventure, je prendrai mes mesures pour le reste. je n'prends pas aussi à [votre] cœur [votre] cependant que la #

Eh bien René vous me dites qu'il n'avait pas porté son ouvrage à [Dorat] Paris? il en a menti car il n'a fait [votre] son voyage que pour cela: j'ai reçu hier une lettre de Garrick qui [vient] me remercie comme si je le voyais. il a fait ces deux lieues à pied, et [est] venu s'établir chez [lui] Garrick sans l'en avoir prévenu, le tout pour faire [en société] avec lui la révision de son ouvrage. au point où ils en étaient ensemble, vous conviendrez que cela est assez étrange? je vois par quelques mots échappés à Garrick dans sa lettre qu'il y a quelques sujets de discussion entre eux, mais comme il ne s'explique point, je n'y comprends rien. Depuis [lundi] l'on travaille impitoyablement à l'ouvrage depuis le [lundi] dix heures du matin jusqu'au [lendemain] onze heures du soir sans lui donner à peine le temps de boire et manger. la révision finie, Garrick cause avec lui d'un plan qu'il a dans la tête, et prie René de l'aider à arranger un incident qui n'est pas encore [trouvé] à sa satisfaction. cela est trop difficile répond froidement René, il est tard, je ne suis point accoutumé à veiller. une fois, je passe demain [à] six heures du matin, il est temps de dormir. il se lève, sans se coucher et va [à] Garrick pétrifié de son procédé. Voilà ces hommes que vous croyez si pénétré de vos torts, ajoutez à cette réflexion un propos singulier de la femme de Garrick dans [laquelle] je vous prie de faire notre procès. cette femme n'est qu'une bonne femme, mais elle a le tact juste. Elle a par dessus tous celui des caractères. Voyant son mari révolté à tout de dépit de René, elle lui en demande la raison. il lui dit. c'est la manque de délicatesse de cet homme ajoute t'il qui m'afflige, j'ai me faire travailler comme un manœuvre, je ne vaux rien seul je crois vous avez [vu] si il m'avait refusé aussi résolument de s'occuper pour moi un quart d'heure [de] .... Vous êtes étonné de cela, lui répond sa femme, vous ne le connaissez donc

Page reproduced from the 141st cahier of the Arsenal MS. This cahier, entirely re-written in handwriting No. 2, plants in the original narrative Diderot's false charge of selfishness against Rousseau, made in his Tablets and written out by himself in the Arsenal notes. Comparison of this page with Diderot's note (facsimile 8) shows that Madame d'Epinay has literally reproduced Diderot's words. (For incident see vol. ii. p. 25.)



This double page is reproduced from the 155th cahier, Arsenal MS., an old cahier which has been replaced by the 147th cahier. The passage (as shown in facsimile) interpolated on the blank page opposite the text, in No. 2 handwriting in the 155th old cahier, in the 147th cahier enters into the text of the re-written narrative. The purpose of the interpolation is to introduce the story of Diderot's supposed advice to Rousseau about his letter to Saint-Lambert as Diderot has related it in his Tablets. (For the incident see vol. ii. pp. 28, 29.)



Page reproduced from the old cahier of the Arsenal MS. 157, which has been replaced by the new cahier 149. The side note in handwriting No. 2 shows the interpolation of a question attributed to the heroine about a printed Letter of René's, where Garnier is accused of treachery. The purpose is to support Diderot's falsehood. That Rousseau's Lettre a d'Alembert was published when no quarrel had taken place; and also that his "indiscreet," but not treacherous, betrayal of Jean Jacques' secret was brought about by a deceit practised by Jean Jacques himself. (For the incident see vol. ii. p. 51.)

catch glimpses of now and again, in imperfectly-effaced expressions of admiration or affection for René—like a stolen smile from Madame d'Epinay herself to her old favourite Jean Jacques—smiled upon him through prison bars.

The Archives Manuscript, then, even taken alone, proves that the description of Rousseau and the account of his behaviour to his "old friends" found in the *Memoirs* to-day, and used by modern critics to correct the *Confessions*, is *not* the first account, and does not belong to the original narrative of Madame d'Epinay.

But does this description of René, which tallies so exactly with the description of the *artificieux scélérat* Jean Jacques, of Grimm and Diderot, belong to Madame d'Epinay at all? And if it does not, who was its true author?

Here is a question which an attentive examination of the Arsenal Manuscript will positively decide for us.

This manuscript[1] consists of the forty-four remaining cahiers of the narrative; and of a collection of old cahiers and loose pages. Amongst these last we have a list of Notes jotted down on scraps of paper, of the very greatest importance. The cahiers of the Arsenal Manuscript do not reveal to an unprepared investigator the alterations of the original story in the same startling way as do the Archives cahiers; because we have now reached the part of the narrative that deals with René's misdeeds as the leading incident; and accordingly the handwriting of the interloper who re-writes the original story predominates. But, probably through an oversight, some of the old cahiers showing the first handwriting remain;[2] and although they have been cut

[1] See Catalogue, MSS. xviiie siècle, 3158. 260 bis. B. F.

[2] Thus we have an old cahier, 142, which is the corrected rough copy of cahier 139 of the Archives MS., and cahiers 155–157, 158 and 159 are the original corrected cahiers—reproduced in cahiers 147–149, 150 and 151. See for a full account Appendix, Note D, vol. i. p. 368.

about, and altered, we are able to discover in them the precise moment when the alterations have been made, and in some cases, where the corrections have been merely written over the text, it is possible to compare different versions of the same incident—a comparison which also leaves more mysterious than ever the singular if involuntary blindness of MM. Perey and Maugras: who could not, one would think, have proclaimed as an "undeniable fact" the "perfect exactitude" and "veracity" of the *Memoirs* had they examined these cahiers.

But the documents of supreme importance in this inquiry are the Notes I have already spoken of. Their purpose is indicated by the general heading—"Notes of the alterations to be made in the fable" (Notes des changements à faire dans la fable). And it is this list of the changes which an examination of the Archives and Arsenal cahiers proves have been made in obedience to the instructions given in the Notes, which places in our hands the patent proof needed to establish that the original story told by Madame d'Epinay has been altered in such a way as to make it agree with the description of Rousseau given by Grimm and Diderot.

Although these "Notes" are written on loose scraps of paper and on torn fragments of old cahiers, and although they have been jotted down without regard to the order of events, it is possible to classify them, because each note is accompanied by the number of the cahier where the alteration had to be made. As a result of the alterations, the numbers that accompany the Notes do not correspond exactly to-day with those of the re-written cahiers: but they do correspond with the old cahiers still preserved; and in any case, by observing the order of the numbers given, the "Notes" serve as a perfect clue, enabling us to follow the falsification of the original story, and to assure ourselves that all the interpolated passages and re-written chapters found in the manuscript represent "changes" carried out

strictly in accordance with the instructions set forth in the notes.

The larger number of these notes shows the handwriting that alters the manuscript. There are some very important exceptions, however, to this rule, as will presently be seen, when we come to the discovery of the particular Note that does indeed serve the very purpose needed—that flings suddenly open the door of this hidden chamber, and, letting in a flash of light, helps us to distinguish the features of the conspirators.

But here, in connection with these different handwritings which, especially in the Archives Manuscript, force themselves upon the critic's attention, it is necessary to explain a mistaken conclusion of my own about this question, because facsimiles of the two handwritings were also reproduced in my *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau;* and in 1895, when I was at the outset only of these particular investigations, I held the opinion that the delicate faded handwriting of the original manuscript (facsimile No. 1) was Madame d'Epinay's; and that the bold and more fresh handwriting of Rousseau's calumniator (facsimile No. 2) belonged to some person employed by Grimm to alter Madame d'Epinay's narrative — probably after her death.

No doubt this theory was all the more readily accepted by me, because it fitted in with my old affection for the amiable woman who built Jean Jacques his Hermitage; and with my reluctance to believe her associated in the plot to injure her former favourite. But my opinion had also the support of some positive assertions of MM. Perey and Maugras, who claim to have had original autographs to examine confided to them by Madame d'Epinay's descendants. Speaking with the authority their special private sources of information gave them, these writers affirm that a certain document belonging to the Arsenal Manuscript was written by Madame d'Epinay herself:—"*la page suivante,*" they stated, when quoting

it—"*entièrement écrite de sa main.*" Now this page shows the handwriting reproduced in facsimile No. 1. Later researches, however, proved that even upon this simple question MM. Perey and Maugras mislead their readers! The document they refer to is *not* in Madame d'Epinay's handwriting. The writer was a secretary employed by her from 1755 to 1778, to whom also she must have either dictated, or given to copy, the record of her childish memories, and of her impressions and observations, thrown into the form of a romantic journal. It may here be remarked that this particular letter quoted by the authors of *La Jeunesse de Madame d'Epinay* in proof of their assertion that the lady intended her *Memoirs* to be circulated only amongst her private friends, is shown by its closing sentence [1] (suppressed by MM. Perey and Maugras) to belong to a period before the quarrel with Rousseau, and hence to prove nothing in connection with Madame d'Epinay's intentions about publishing her work when it came later on to deal with events which had not then happened.

But the disappointing part of this discovery was not that Madame d'Epinay dictated to a secretary, instead of writing with her own hand, the first version of her story. The distressing fact was that it should have been her own hand which, fourteen or fifteen years later, sowed with calumnies the yellow pages which once held regretful memories of her former friend.

The conviction that facsimile No. 2, showing the hand which alters and interpolates passages in the Archives manuscript must be recognized as Madame d'Epinay's, came to me (with all the sense of a personal disappointment) after the investigation of her papers possessed by the Bibliothèque Nationale, confirmed by the specimen

[1] Here is this sentence—"Bon, voilà Desbarres (Duclos *) qui revient me voir—O cet homme est odieux! Bonjour, cher Tuteur; venez demain diner avec moi; vous y trouverez St. Urbain (*Gauffecourt*), René (*Rousseau*) and M. Volx (*Grimm*). René peut-être nous lira quelquechose."

* See Arsenal MS.

of her handwriting given in the *Dictionnaire des Autographes*. No further doubt was permitted by the courteous reply vouchsafed me by the Director of the Neufchatel Public Library, to whom I wrote, enclosing my two facsimiles, and begging him to compare them with Madame d'Epinay's original letters. The reply, *that facsimile No. 2 is unmistakably Madame d'Epinay's own writing* once and for ever establishes the fact that she did falsify with her own hand her original narrative.

But although it is disappointing to find Madame d'Epinay to this extent guilty of treachery to her old friendship, further researches establish, by quite as irrefragable proofs, that she was not the author of the libels handed down in her book, but only the passive instrument of the inventors of these libels, who, having brought their store of tares into her domain, directed her hand in planting them.

That although her hand wrote them, Madame d'Epinay did not herself draw up these notes, but that she took them down from the dictation of critics whose instructions she carried out when changing her own story, is proved by the wording of the notes. The author of the story is taken to task by her critics—sometimes with very little consideration. Thus in connection with some protest of the heroine's against the supposition that she had bestowed her favours on Desbarres (Duclos), the critic's observation is not respectful to Madame d'Epinay, who was defending herself against scandalous reports upon the character of her past relations with Duclos :—

"On ne dit pas," reproves the critic, "il ne m'a pas touché du bout des doigts, quand personne ne vous a jamais touché du bout des doigts."

Who the true authors of the notes were might have been safely guessed from the purpose they reveal. This purpose is not the glorification of Madame d'Epinay in the character of Madame de Montbrillant, nor her justification from the charges of treachery brought against her

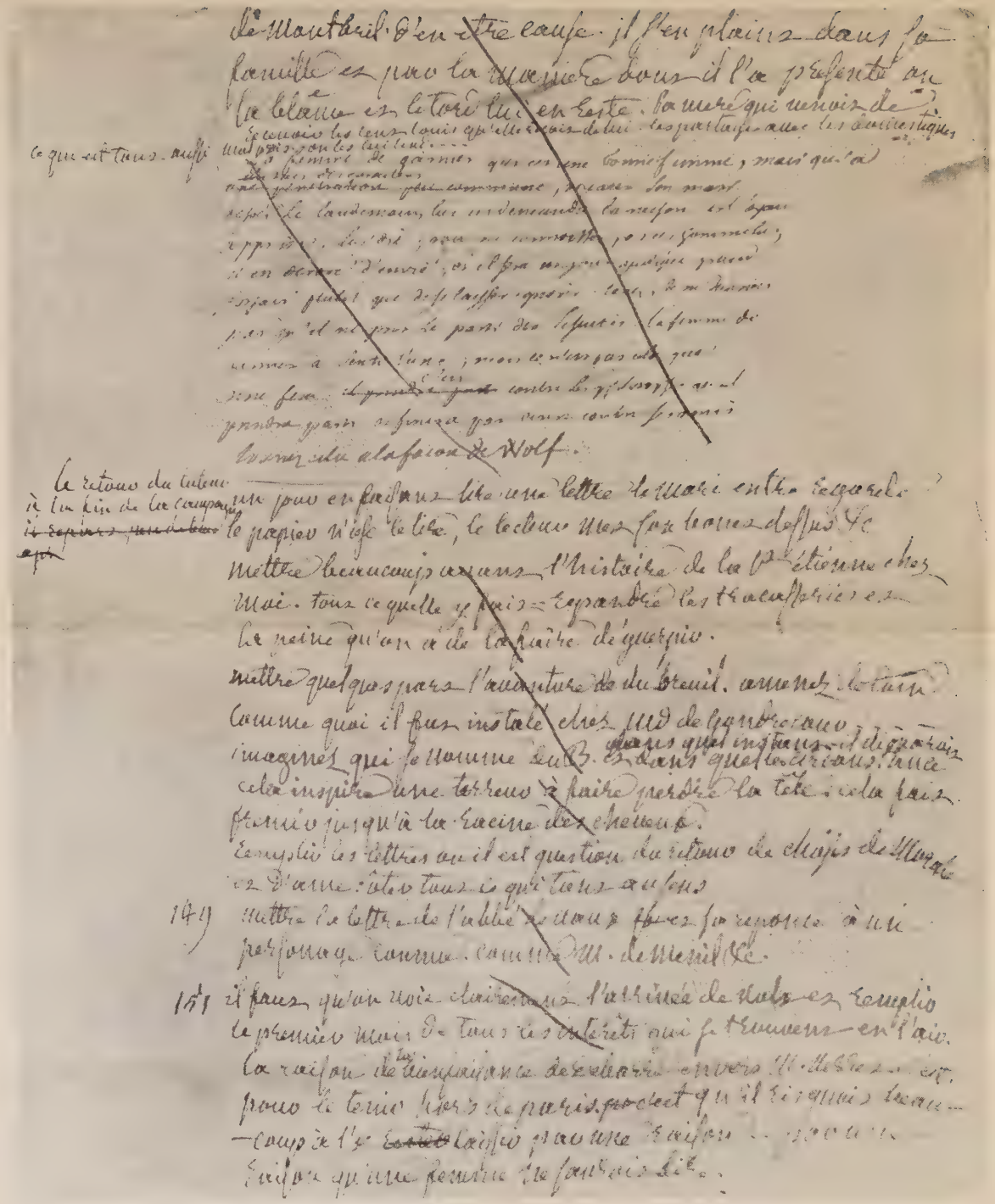
by Rousseau in the *Confessions*. The purpose is the glorification of Grimm and Diderot, under the names of Volx and Garnier; and the reproduction of the same libels against Rousseau that were circulated in the *Correspondance Littéraire* and recorded secretly in the Tablets of Diderot; and that, in later years, were confided to personages so absolutely certain to spread them abroad as Marmontel and La Harpe.

But in deciding this question, we have, fortunately, not assumptions, but positive evidence to rely upon.

Amongst the notes written by Madame d'Epinay are found jotted down additions to and alterations of the original instructions, *and these alterations are in the known handwritings of Grimm and Diderot.*

Upon one occasion especially, in connection with a libellous story used to illustrate Rousseau's odious selfishness, an incident frequently quoted to serve this purpose also by modern critics, Diderot himself takes the pen and carefully writes out the whole anecdote, that he had also quoted in his "Tablettes" amongst the list of "abominable actions" ("les scélératesses") that proved Rousseau a monster.

The conclusive character of the evidence afforded by this note is of such weight, that in order to save all possibility of any doubt in the minds of admirers of Diderot that the facts are as I am stating them, this page has been photographed from the manuscript (the handwriting may be compared with the facsimile of Diderot's autograph given by M. Maurice Tourneux in his edition of Diderot's works, vol. xvi.—A specimen of Grimm's handwriting is given in the edition of the *Correspondance Littéraire* by the same distinguished critic. M. Tourneux's editions of Grimm and of Diderot can be consulted by English readers in the British Museum Library).



This all-important Note, *which establishes Diderot's personal presence and share in drawing up the libels to be inserted as "changes" in Madame d'Epinay's story*, is reproduced from a double page of Notes found amongst the loose pages of the Arsenal MS.; the page is numbered 19. The purpose is to secure an exact reproduction of a charge made against Rousseau in the *Tablets* and constantly repeated by Diderot. (For reproduction and translation see vol. i. p. 93; explanation, vol. ii. p. 24.)

NOTE BY DIDEROT.

"La femme de Garnier qui n'est-qu'une bonne femme mais qui a une pénétration peu commune voyant son mari désolé le lendemain lui en demande la raison, et l'ayant appris lui dit: 'vous ne connaissez pas cet homme là, il en dévore d'envie: et il fera un jour quelque grand forfait plutôt que de se laisser ignorer. Tiens je ne jurerais pas qu'il ne prit le parti des Jésuites.' La femme de Garnier a senti juste, mais ce n'est pas cela que René fera: c'est contre les philosophes qu'il prendra parti et finira par écrire contre ses amis—tournez cela à la façon de Wolf."

TRANSLATION.

"Garnier's wife, who is a simple woman, but who has unusual penetration, seeing her husband much upset next day, asked the reason; and, having heard it, said: 'You don't know this man; he is eaten up with envy. You will see he will commit a crime some day rather than remain unknown—I wouldn't swear that he does not take the part of the Jesuits.' Garnier's wife has felt rightly: but this is not what René will do, it is against the philosophers that he will take sides, and will finish off by writing against his friends—arrange that in the same way as the story of Wolf."

In the 141 cahiers of the Arsenal MS. the story is told of René's abominable selfishness which causes Garnier's wife to show her unusual penetration (see facsimile 5). The episode is found in the third volume of the *Memoirs*, pp. 60, 61 and 62. In Diderot's "Tablettes" the anecdote makes one of Rousseau's "crimes" against his friends." "One evening," affirmed Diderot, "he was in a mood to sit up late. I asked him to advise me about a phrase. Immediately he said, 'It is time to go to bed.'" It is not possible to prove that Rousseau was not guilty upon any occasion of saying 'It is time to go to bed' when Diderot wished to read him his manuscript, but it can be proved that the story as suggested in these volumes, and reproduced in the *Memoirs*, was a falsehood. (See vol. ii. p. 24.)

Another page of the Arsenal Manuscript it has seemed useful to photograph is the one where the note occurs recommending that the whole story of René should be revised from the commencement. Here is a translation of the recommendation which, as we follow later on the alterations made in "the fable," we shall find has been faithfully obeyed.

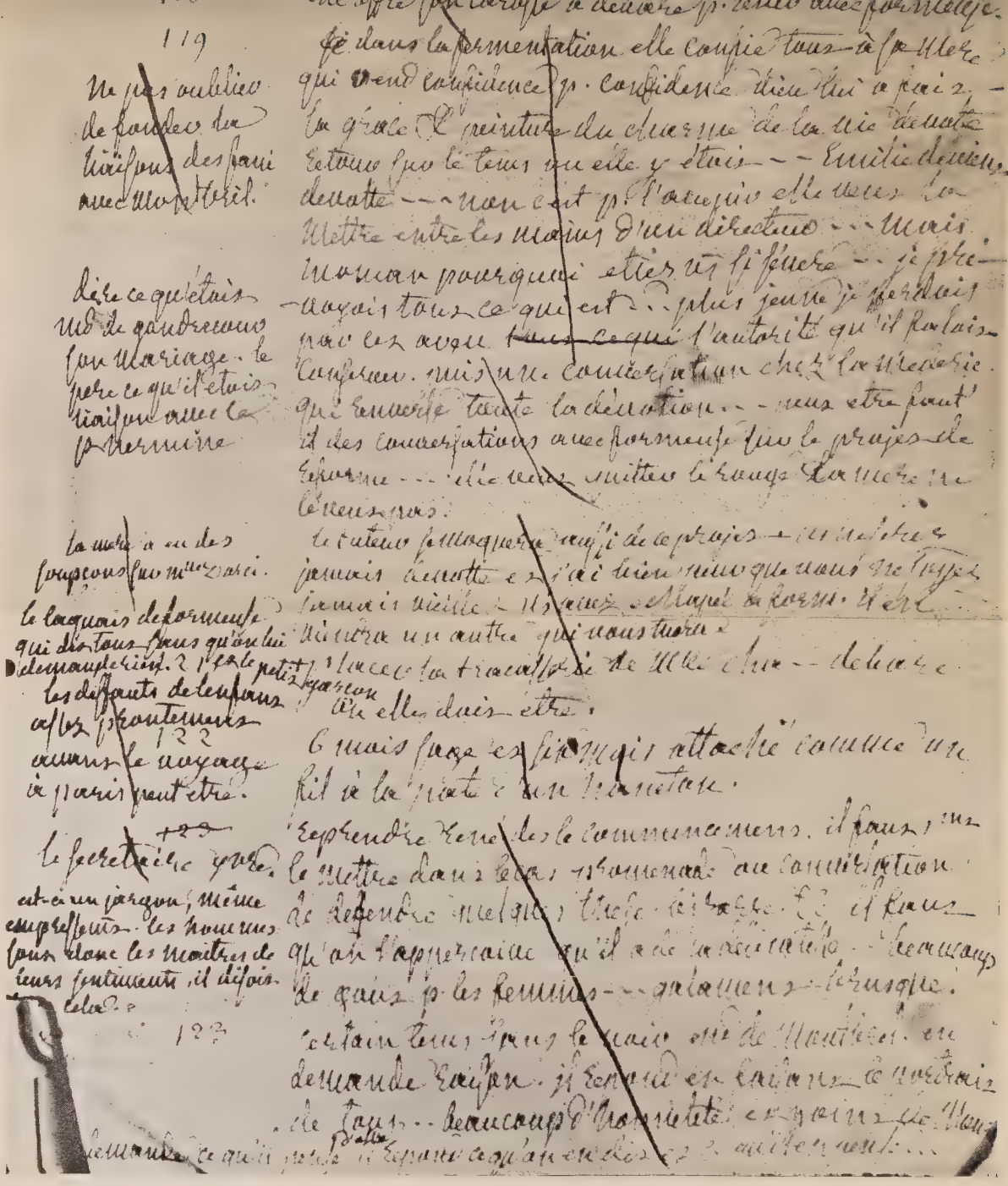
(Note directing the re-writing of Rousseau's story—in Madame d'Epinay's work.)

"Reprendre René dès le commencement. Il faut me le mettre dans leurs promenades ou conversations de défendre quelques thèses bizarres. Il faut qu'on s'apperçoive qu'il a de la délicatesse beaucoup de gout pour les femmes . . . galament brusque certain tems sans le voir. Madme. de Montbrillan demande raison—il répond en faisant le portrait de tous . . . beaucoup d'honnêteté et point de mœurs—demande ce qu'il pense d'elle—repond ce qu'on dit, et ce qu'il en pense."

TRANSLATION.

"Revise René from the beginning. He must be made in their walks and conversations to defend fantastic theories. It must be perceived that he has delicacy—a strong liking for women . . . can be brusque with gallantry. Some time passes without seeing him. Madame Montbrillant asks the reason—he replies by painting every one's portrait—(they have) much politeness but no morality—asks what he thinks of her—he replies what people say and what he thinks."

The first direction to re-write René's story applies to the general alteration of the whole narrative. But the very phrase of this sophist who defends "*des thèses bizarres*" is interpolated in cahier 139 thus: "Je ne sais trop si je lui ferais tort de dire qu'il est plus flatté du plaisir de soutenir des thèses bizarres que peiné des alarmes que peuvent jeter ses sophismes dans le cœur de ceux qui l'écoutent."—*Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 30.



This page of Notes, where the last directs *Reprendre René dès le commencement*, is reproduced from a loose cahier of Notes belonging to the Arsenal MS. The pages are numbered 129 to 139, but as they are covered on both sides, this cahier represents twenty pages of notes. The purpose of the general directions for the re-writing of René is clearly to produce a picture after the plan of the mythical Jean Jacques of the legend invented by Grimm and Diderot. (See vol. i. p. 94, also p. 131 and p. 223.)

Nothing of course can be more evident than that the otes containing directions for the "changes" that are to e made in the fable show what was *not* in the original arrative told by Madame d'Epinay. *This original arrative, then, did not agree with the account given Grimm and Diderot of Rousseau's character and nduct; and if we find that the René of the Manu-ript (or the Jean Jacques of the printed Memoirs) sembles the sophist and impostor described in the orrespondance Littéraire and in Diderot's "Tablets," e explanation is a simple one; the portrait has the me features, not because Madame d'Epinay painted dependently the same picture, but because her picture her old friend has been turned out of doors, and a py of the Encyclopædists' picture brought in to take place.*

Nothing can be more certain either than that Diderot d Grimm did not take all the trouble to revise step by ep, and incident by incident, Madame d'Epinay's story René without some ulterior purpose in connection th the future publication of the work. What that terior purpose was we find indicated in Diderot's ophecy in his Note to the *Essay upon Seneca;* in e date of the publication of Brunet's *Memoirs;* and pecially in the first mention of the work in the *ographie Universelle.* But we shall discover with uch more certitude this design, and the skill and uble used in carrying it out, when we have traced the tory of the manuscripts which enables us to expose this posture.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT REACHED THE ARCHIVE AND ARSENAL LIBRARIES, AND HOW THE FAIR COPY BRUNET'S MANUSCRIPT, REACHED THE RUE DE SÉVIGN LIBRARY AS A POSSESSION OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQU HISTORIQUE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS.

WHILST examining the cahiers so carefully correcte under the direction of Diderot and Grimm, so tenderl handled by Madame d'Epinay herself—as the tying o the yellow pages with the faded ribbons testifies—on question perplexed me greatly. This manuscript coul not have been the one J. C. Brunet, or A. A. Barbie discovered in the hands of the "heirs of Lecourt d Villière." What was the explanation of these tw manuscripts; and how were they related to each other

MM. Perey and Maugras, with all their boaste acquaintanceship with autograph documents, had no one scrap of information to give about either manuscript

"How," asked these writers about the document use by Brunet, "did that document come to be in th possession of Lecourt de Villière? *We have found i impossible to discover.*"

About the manuscript they had themselves employed it has been seen, "the only thing that was certain," fo these writers, "was that the whole manuscript (no divided between the Archives and Arsenal) was seize in Grimm's house, 3, Rue de Mont Blanc, when it wa pillaged in 1793."

But the "pillage" of Grimm's house, to use MM Percy and Maugras' terms, in 1793, was conducted i strict accordance with the rules laid down by th Revolutionary Government about the confiscation, an

devotion to public uses, of the goods left in France by absentees proclaimed to be "emigrants." M. Maurice Tourneux, in his valuable notes to the *Correspondance Littéraire*, has traced the fate of Grimm's library and papers. In the first place they were transported from the Rue de Mont Blanc to the National Literary Depôt of the Rue de Marc. Here, by commissaries especially appointed for the work, an inventory was drawn up of the "emigrant's" books and other literary or art belongings; and sent to the Committee of Public Instruction. In this first inventory, the manuscript of Madame d'Epinay's work is included under the general heading of "thirty-four packets of loose papers, not worth description"—"*trente-quatre paquets de paperasses, ne méritant aucune description.*"

This item in the inventory attracted the attention of a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, who, a short time after the confiscation of Grimm's goods, was appointed to examine his papers in the interests of Diderot's daughter, Mme. de Vandueil. The report of this personage, an ex-Dominican monk named Poirier, contains the following passage:[1]—

"The thirty-four packets of loose papers are in cardboard cases. I opened several of them. Some contain the fair copies of different works; others, letters addressed to Grimm—all in the greatest confusion. In this first very hurried inspection of some of these cases, I did not perceive any letters of Diderot's; but I fell upon one or two which concerned him intimately. *For the rest, it appears that he was very much bound up with the philosophers of that time; and upon terms of most intimate friendship with Madame de la Live,*[2] *from whom there are many original letters, and several other original writings.*"

Now by Grimm's account, as has been seen, Madame

[1] Manuscripts Bibliothèque Nationale, Fr. 20843.

[2] La Live was the family name of Madame d'Epinay's husband, called d'Epinay from his estate.

d'Epinay left in the way of original writings only an incomplete continuation to her *Conversations d'Emilie* and *l'Ebauche d'un long roman*—in other words, the work in manuscript given, after its publication, the title of *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay*. Dom Poirier's remark that Diderot (*the* philosopher, *par excellence*, by the election of the sect) "appears to have been very intimate with the philosophers of that time,"—*tres lié avec les philosophes de ce temps-là*,—proves that the ex-Dominican monk was not himself sufficiently familiar with the philosophers, or their world, to have discovered under the pseudonyms of Garnier, Volx, and René, the real personages who figured in Madame d'Epinay's novel. The manuscript remained then undisturbed in the National Depôt, Rue de Marc, classified under the heading of "paperasses ne méritant aucune description."

Here we have the first fortunate accident for the conspirators. It is interesting to picture what would have been the result if a better-informed member of the Committee of Public Instruction had inspected these papers, and discovering the true character of the pretended novel had brought it to light in an epoch when Dupeyrou, Deleyre, and Madame de la Tour de Franqueville were still alive, amongst the competent and zealous defenders of Rousseau; when Madame d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert would have found themselves compelled to testify to the falsehoods told about circumstances with which they were connected; when Grimm himself was still there, to be "afflicted" with inquiries about his own share, and Diderot's share, in this effort to build up false charges against a dead man held in the highest honour. These documents would have secured the immediate and sensational exposure of the conspiracy against Rousseau; and there would no longer have been any room for later theories, in connection with his "mania of suspicion" and his hatred of the benefactors who had "overwhelmed him with touching kindnesses!"

Left at the Depôt, Rue de Marc, for two years, Grimm's library and papers were then transported to the Depôt des Cordeliers; where again they remained forgotten for three years.

In 1798 Capperonier, the director of the Bibliothèque Nationale, was invited by the Committee of Public Instruction to select from Grimm's library the works he considered of chief public importance. The list of works chosen by Capperonier is given, with an account of these proceedings, in the *Archives des Depôts Nationaux* preserved in the Arsenal.[1] The original writings of Madame de la Live signalized by Dom Poirier do not figure in the list. By the ordinary method followed, however, the Committee of Public Instruction would, after the selection made for the Bibliothèque Nationale, have ordered any remaining books or manuscripts, possessing general interest, to be distributed amongst other public libraries. The notice that we have seen accompanies the Archives manuscript establishes that the *Lettres de Madame de Montbrillant* reached the library in this way. One remark, however, may here be made upon this notice. The suggestion that the manuscript appears to have been sent by the National Assembly or by the Convention to the Committee of Public Instruction implies that it was from this last institution that the Library of the Archives received it. But, inasmuch as it belonged to the duties of this Committee to deal directly with the literary and art treasures found in the houses of emigrants, it does not seem probable that the National Assembly, or the Convention, had any hand in these arrangements. With regard to the division of the manuscript, it appears to me impossible to suppose it was the result of carelessness. We have to appreciate the fact that the 140 cahiers consigned to the Archives were accompanied by a "key" to the names of the real personages of the story. Whilst the collection of forty-five cahiers and

[1] Tome xiii. p. 352.

loose papers sent to the Arsenal, viz. *the portion of the work which contains the story of René's abominable ingratitude to his benefactress*, had no such key: and was concealed under the entirely misleading title (which still figures in the Arsenal Catalogue) of *Histoire de Madame de Rambure*—there being no Madame de Rambure amongst the personages of the story, although the name does appear on the outer sheet of the manuscript, marked out, and with the name of the actual heroine, Madame de Montbrillant, written over it. At this time of day, it remains an open question whether the attempt to divert public attention from this portion of the work was the inconsiderate action of some mistaken enthusiast of J. J. Rousseau, who, perceiving that he was attacked under the mask of "René," wished to conceal these libels; or whether the act was done by some friend of Grimm's, instructed in his designs, and in the plot to withhold these charges until the disappearance of living witnesses, competent to refute them. Whatever the intention may have been, the endeavour to conceal the most interesting chapter of the history was successful. The *Letters of Madame de Montbrillant*, possessed by the Archives, were identified after the publication of the *Memoirs* as an imperfect manuscript of the same work.[1] But *l'Histoire de Madame de Rambure* slumbered undiscovered in its cardboard case for eighty-five years; until M. Maurice Tourneux, when pursuing his researches about Diderot, unearthed it, and made the present of his discovery to MM. Percy and Maugras—whose unfortunate preconception that it "is time to make an end of the eternal discussion about Rousseau" (by obstinately shutting one's eyes to patent proofs that he has been calumniated)—prevented them from turning the present to good account.

So much, then, for the "vicissitudes" that had for their result the division of this manuscript between the

[1] For instance, by F. Campardou, in his *Prodigalités d'un Fermier-général.*

Archives and the Arsenal. As for the reason that led to the deposition of the second manuscript with Lecourt de Villière, they are not so difficult to discover after the path we have already trodden, as they were bound to appear from the position taken up by MM. Perey and Maugras, which was that Madame d'Epinay's work was not intended, either by herself or by Grimm, for publication. Certain as we now are that the work *was* destined, and carefully prepared, for publication, but only in an epoch when all contemporary witnesses had disappeared, there is nothing extraordinary in the choice made by Grimm of Lecourt de Villière, an obscure and a trustworthy person, who had some special reasons for personal attachment to Madame d'Epinay, in whose household he had once held the position of steward. The status of Lecourt de Villière, we find, was not that of secretary to Grimm, but of his confidential agent and accountant, very much the same post, in fact, which he had once held when in the employment of Madame d'Epinay. Here was a man who, entrusted with the document, would have been all the more willing to deal with it in accordance with the instructions given him because he would have been assured that the motive was to serve the good name of a lady whose generosity and kindheartedness, we know, rendered her dependents devotedly attached to her. Lecourt de Villière showed himself extraordinarily loyal and patient, it must be admitted, in leaving to his "heirs" (whoever they may have been) all the profits to be derived from this transaction. But in connection with this heroic patience and self-denial in refraining from all efforts to arrange for the purchase of a saleable manuscript, it should be remembered that, during the Revolution, Grimm's agent, and the former steward of Madame d'Epinay, did wisely to keep in the background all facts connected with his former employment by the enemies of J. J. Rousseau; and that nothing would have been more dangerous for a man in his position

than the suspicion that he had been entrusted with a document intended to refute the *Confessions*.

But all these considerations, whilst they help us to understand Grimm's dealings with Lecourt de Villière, throw no light upon the question of why there were two manuscripts: the one seized in Grimm's house, and the other purchased by J. C. Brunet, and employed for the production of the printed *Memoirs*.

To solve this riddle, all that was needed, I felt convinced, was to find and examine this second manuscript as carefully as the first one, and in comparison with it.

The task ought not to have been so difficult as I found it; for in 1896, when I started on this new voyage of discovery, Brunet's manuscript (had I only known it) had been for eleven years in the possession of a public library! No one, however, appeared to have any knowledge of the facts. At the Bibliothèque Nationale, at the Archives, and at the Arsenal, I received nothing but discouragement in reply to my inquiries about the destiny of this manuscript. Brunet, who had very strong reasons (as we shall presently discover) for not allowing to pass out of his hands the manuscript he professed to have merely abridged, without altering it, in the printed *Memoirs*, kept the document jealously locked up until his death in 1868. Then it was put up for sale, with the famous bibliographer's other books and manuscripts, by Messrs. Labitte, Quai Malaquais, on the 28th April, 1868. The purchaser of this document was a M. Möselmann. Here was all that, for a long time, I was able to discover. Whether M. Möselmann were still alive; what had been his motive in purchasing this historical document; whether he had written anything about it, or shown it to any one; whether it were in any way possible to approach the happy possessor of this treasure, and obtain his permission to examine it,—here were questions I tormented the ever courteous but always discouraging assistant-librarians of these institutions with for several months. And, here, too, it was

an accident that, in the end, brought me the information I wanted.

The advice of a fellow explorer amongst the valuable historical secret documents possessed by the Arsenal Library sent me to the Carnavalet Museum, where, in 1896, the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris was still domiciled.[1] What I went to look for was a manuscript edition of the *Correspondance Littéraire;* but when examining the catalogues of the Bibliothèque Historique I discovered that amongst the documents in its possession was the "*Original manuscript employed by J. C. Brunet for the production of Madame d'Epinay's Memoirs.*"

Here is a translation of the notice prefixed to the first of the nine handsome volumes containing the 2,300 pages of this enormous manuscript; it will be observed that the notice only reproduces the statements of the preface to the printed book:—

"The *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* were published for the first time in 1818, by M. J. C. Brunet, from this manuscript, given to Grimm by Madame d'Epinay herself, and left by him to his last secretary, Lecourt de Villière, when he had to quit France. M. Brunet bought this manuscript in 1817 from the heirs of Lecourt de Villière, and kept it until his death. It was then acquired by M. Möselmann, who bequeathed it to Madame Gouetti. At the sale of this lady's effects, the Bibliothèque Historique purchased it, on the 21st February, 1885, at the price of 600 francs."

No doubt the Directors of the Bibliothèque Historique valued their acquisition as an interesting historical document, as well as a fine specimen of eighteenth-century caligraphy. But it remains a striking illustration of the lack of interest shown in the criticism of Rousseau, and in the endeavour to find out whether he was a calumniator or a much-calumniated man, that, until my own accidental discovery of it, this manuscript had remained as

[1] The Library has now quarters of its own in the Rue de Sévigné.

much a secret document on the shelves of a public library, as it had been when hidden away for thirty-four years after Madame d'Epinay's death, before the publication of the *Memoirs;* and when locked away from investigators for sixty-seven years afterwards, first of all by Brunet, and afterwards by M. Möselmann and by Madame Gouetti. Nevertheless the question of whether the printed edition of the *Memoirs* fairly reproduces the original work is one that can be finally settled only by the examination of this manuscript; whilst by its comparison with the Archives and Arsenal manuscripts, all doubts (if any still remained) as to Grimm's intentions about the publication of the work are extinguished.

The first result of this comparison proves the reason for the existence of the two manuscripts. *Brunet's manuscript is unmistakably the fair copy made from the corrected cahiers* of the original work. All the corrections and interpolations which disfigure the old folios of the Archives and Arsenal manuscripts are found neatly reproduced in the copy re-written for the purposes of publication. The extremely clear and careful handwriting of Brunet's manuscript can be identified as that of one of Grimm's secretaries, employed by him for the *Correspondance Littéraire;* and whom we know to have borne the name of Mailly, because amongst Grimm's papers preserved at the Archives are receipts signed by this same Mailly, acknowledging the payment to him, on Grimm's account, by Meister, of different sums owing to him in consideration of copies of the *Correspondance Littéraire* made for the Empress Catherine.

It becomes evident that if Grimm charged himself with the expense of having this tremendously long manuscript of 2,300 pages copied by such an excellent penman as Mailly, he did it with the view of preparing the work for future production. But it was not only money the ordinarily cautious Grimm was willing to sacrifice, to serve the end he had in view. The facts prove to us

that this positive and prudent personage, so capable (as the sentimental Madame d'Epinay found to her grief) of putting self-interest before love, in affairs of the heart, became, under the dominion of the supreme hatred of Rousseau, that was certainly the greatest passion he knew, absolutely self devoted in his malice; and ready to expose himself to risks that might easily have cost him his life.

For, there can be no doubt about it, after the publication of the second part of the *Confessions* in 1789, and especially after the appearance of Ginguené's *Letters* in 1791, Paris was not a safe residence for the denounced calumniator and persecutor of Rousseau. He had felt it: and had left France for a time. But he returned, in as quiet a manner as possible, in October 1791; and spent four months secluded in his house, 3, Rue de Mont Blanc, seeing no one, and evidently occupied in settling some urgent private affairs. Evidently also what had brought him back to Paris was not the removal of his property left there: for all his furniture, clothing, books, etc., were seized in his house in 1793.

In his *Mémoires Historiques sur l'Origine et les suites de mon attachement pour l'Impératrice Catherine*, Grimm makes the sole reason for his return to Paris his anxiety to place in safety his confidential correspondence with the Empress of all the Russias.

"In the course of this year 1791," he wrote, "her Majesty became anxious about her correspondence and her papers. I returned to Paris in October 1791, not to burn them, but to contrive to get them out of France. No doubt I was tempted at the same time to save many things that were precious to myself. But the times were so troubled it was easy to see that at the slightest appearance of a removal, the first package leaving my house would have been searched and probably pillaged, under the pretext of a conspiracy against liberty. I was, I knew, already denounced in the sections and committees, as engaged in an intimate correspond-

ence with the Empress, supposed to be unfavourable to the principles of the Revolution. I gave up, then, every idea of any stir or bustle in my house ; and inasmuch as I had made myself responsible to her Majesty for the safety of her papers, I esteemed it a rigorous duty to sacrifice everything to that consideration. By force of precautions I succeeded in getting this precious trust clandestinely out of my hands, and beyond the French frontiers ; and, without any one's knowledge, placed in safe hands in Germany."

Four months seem a long time to have given to the task of getting letters out of his house ; and the fact that it was also at this period that the manuscript afterwards purchased by J. C. Brunet was placed in the hands of Lecourt de Villière is affirmed by this editor ; who probably received the information from the personages in possession of the document when he obtained it. The supposition that it was during these four months that Mailly completed the fair copy of Madame d'Epinay's work seems to be confirmed by all the circumstances of the case. No doubt the task of re-copying the old cahiers arranged for that purpose must have been commenced during Madame d'Epinay's lifetime ; for the first four volumes of the nine volumes possessed by the Bibliothèque Historique show frequent small corrections in her handwriting. But the last five volumes have no such corrections—in other words, give no sign of any revision by the author ; and here we have reasons for concluding that the copying was completed after her death ; and that the period when it was completed was, precisely, this interval between November 1791 and February 1792, when Grimm, in daily peril of arrest, kept himself close in his house, 3, Rue de Mont Blanc, seems to me established by the neglect of an obvious precaution, only to be accounted for by the haste with which the task was accomplished ; and by Grimm's acknowledged nervousness under his sense of the malevolent curiosity watchful of his movements. It

would have been so plainly an act of prudence, when Mailly's work was done, to have destroyed the original cahiers with the damnatory evidence of his own and Diderot's corrections, that the seizure of these documents in his house, the following year, can only be explained by Grimm's desire to get quietly away from Paris, when his supreme end was obtained, without arousing suspicion by destroying papers. It is probable that he was also under the pleasant delusion common to most emigrants, that the revolutionary fever was bound to spend itself soon; and that, the old order restored, he would be able to return to Paris later on, and put his house in order.

Things did not, as we know, follow this course: and Grimm was never to see Paris again. When he heard of the confiscation of all his belongings the following year, at Dusseldorf, his protest against "this pillage" proves his anxiety to disavow, in advance, all property in the manuscript he wished to class amongst papers "not belonging to him," placed in his hands by friends.

"Although for eighteen years," he wrote, "I had been to every one's knowledge attached as the Minister of a foreign state to the court of Louis XVI., one day they descended upon my house, without any preliminary formalities, removed the seals, and took possession of everything, merely informing my servants (to this day I know not upon whose authority nor in virtue of what law) that I was proclaimed an emigrant. At the time I was two hundred leagues distant from Paris. It did not take them three weeks to empty my house. My furniture, clothes, house and body linen, a library it had taken me my life to collect, my private correspondence, my manuscripts, *a large number of papers placed in my hands by friends*, which did not belong to me, all was seized and carried off I know not where, to be sold to the highest bidder, or by secret arrangements made by those who had prepared this disloyal pillage."

Notwithstanding this misadventure, luck put itself on Grimm's side, and averted the exposure, which seemed

inevitable, of his secret plot against Rousseau. It has been seen how the appearance of the old folios and loose papers of the work found amongst Grimm's papers alarmed the indolence, more than it stimulated the curiosity of the commissaries who drew up the first inventory of his library and manuscripts. It has been seen, too, how ignorance about the philosophers and their epoch in an unfrocked monk, hid from Dom Poirier, also, the true character of the original writings of Madame de la Live. And, lastly, it has been seen how either the ill-advised timidity of an admirer of Rousseau, or else the cautious craft of an accomplice of Grimm's, brought about the entombment in the Arsenal Library, of the important chapters of this libellous history under the misleading title of *Histoire de Madame de Rambure.* It remains to be recognized how another accident made the purchaser of the document deposited with Lecourt de Villière not only one of a group of literary editors whose interests and prejudices were with the Encyclopædists and adverse to Rousseau, but also a man well up in the history of the epoch, who, in order to enhance the importance of the work he gave the world, wilfully tampered with the text, with the purpose of lending it a more literal historical character than its original authors had meant to claim for it. And how, as a result of the fresh falsification of this already falsified work, new complications were introduced into the case. So that it became more difficult for such honest and painstaking critics as Musset Pathay and Boiteau (with only the printed *Memoirs* to guide them) to arrive at a clear idea of the designs of the original conspirators.

CHAPTER IV

THE FALSIFICATION BY THE EDITORS OF THE PRINTED MEMOIRS OF THE MANUSCRIPT PURCHASED FROM THE "HEIRS OF LECOURT DE VILLIÈRE"—REVEALED IN THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE RUE DE SÉVIGNÉ LIBRARY.

The corrections made by Madame d'Epinay's hand in Brunet's manuscript do not occur, as it has been already said, after the fourth of the nine volumes. But other and much more extensive corrections are found throughout the work; and when we compare the manuscript with the printed *Memoirs*, there remains no doubt that these corrections show all the trouble taken by the editors (or, if J. C. Brunet is to be believed, by his assistant-editor Parison, alone) to arrange the work for the printers.

And this arrangement of the text, carried out by corrections that appear sometimes written on the blank pages facing the manuscript, sometimes on strips of greenish grey paper lightly pasted over the written page, proves how entirely false were the professions made in the preface to the printed book.[1]

"To secure the success of the work with readers of a different time," affirmed the author of this preface, "it has been found necessary to suppress frequent repetitions, useless episodes, and a good number of the accusations against Monsieur d'Epinay. *But we have not chosen to change anything, either in the somewhat singular form of the work, or in the facts, or even in the style, which has not always the correctness which one might wish*

[1] In the Appendix, Note D, will be found a complete list of the alterations made in the MS. by the editors of the printed volume.

to find in it. And if we do not publish everything which Madame d'Epinay has written, at least we publish nothing which she did not write."

Attention to the corrections and alterations made by the editors in the text, proves that every one of these statements is an untruth.

The editors have printed as though included in the work a great many passages and several letters that Madame d'Épinay did not give to the original work; and that we find in the manuscript on inserted pages.

They have altered a large number of statements found in the manuscript, in such a way as to make it appear that Madame d'Epinay related the facts truthfully, whereas in the manuscript it is apparent that historical events were falsely reported.[1] The editors have also altered different letters given in the manuscript, with the purpose of making it seem that Madame d'Epinay's version of them was the same that we have in Rousseau's published correspondence; the fact being that Madame d'Epinay gave false letters, fabricated to suit the purpose of her story.

They have given an entirely different form and character to the original work, by attempting to lend it the authority of a serious autobiography, where a truthful and literal account was given of historical personages and real events; whereas the special character of this work was that it was intended for a novel, in order that the author might lend freely to some historical personages she placed in fictitious circumstances the conduct and qualities it pleased her to attribute to them: without taking any pledges to afford proofs of the exactitude of the facts she related.

And this deliberate alteration of the form and character of the original work has compelled the editor of the printed *Memoirs* to suppress, not only repetitions and tedious episodes, but a large number of very entertaining and important narratives, simply because it was

[1] See Appendix, Note D.

impossible to make these incidents fit in with the theory that we have to deal with a correct historical account of events that can be traced home to the life experiences of Madame d'Epinay herself, or of Grimm, or of Diderot, or of Rousseau.

And it becomes evident, if we compare the work as it came out of the nineteenth-century editors' hands with the work as the two manuscripts show it to us re-arranged by Madame d'Epinay's first peremptory editors, Grimm and Diderot, that the last falsifiers of the document have worked at cross purposes with the earlier ones. For the original conspirators against Rousseau had a very deliberate and well-thought-out design in the apparently careless historical blunders that J. C. Brunet, with his "knowledge of the times," set himself studiously to correct. Their intention was to establish the general impression of Jean Jacques as an impostor, an ingrate, a mischievous sophist, a self-centred egotist, in the end driven mad by envy, vanity, suspiciousness and love of notoriety, but to escape from the necessity of substantiating any of the accusations put forward in support of this theory of his character, by transparent disguises thrown over these charges, permitting their authors the licence allowed to novelists from whom exactitude in matters of fact cannot be required.

Upon a different occasion we find Diderot, whose taste for reaching his ends by circuitous rather than straight roads was recognized by his most friendly critics, employing the same plan of campaign that he was probably responsible for here.

In his famous Note to the *Essay upon Seneca*, Diderot did not name the "artificial scoundrel" he invited the world at large to distrust and detest as the calumniator of his old friends. And at the end of his denunciation of the "atrocious man," the "ingrate," the "coward," etc., he wrote, "*But did such a monster as this ever exist? I cannot believe it.*"

Here was a phrase which, four years later, when a second

edition of the *Essay* was produced, Diderot knew how to make good use of.

"It has been said," he wrote, after quoting this Note, "that this denunciation was meant for Jean Jacques Rousseau. But did Jean Jacques then write such a work as I have described? Has he calumniated his old friends? Has he been guilty of the blackest ingratitude towards his benefactors? Has he left on his tomb the revelation of secrets entrusted to him, or surprised by him? May this cruel indiscretion sow trouble in united families, and kindle enmities between people who before loved each other? If this be so, then I shall still say, and shall still write on his monument: This Jean Jacques was a perversely wicked man. But has Jean Jacques done nothing of all this? *Then it was not of him I was speaking.* Did there ever exist a man so false and wicked as to accuse himself of horrible actions, in order to obtain belief in the horrible actions he laid to the charge of others? *I have protested that I cannot believe it. Censors, of what do you complain then? If blame there be, it belongs to yourselves. I have sketched a hideous head—it is you who have written the name of the model beneath it.*"

Had the design of the original authors of the portrait of the false philosopher, false hermit, and false friend who behaves so abominably to his benefactress, in Madame d'Epinay's novel, been carried out, it would have been the readers of the book who would have been responsible for writing the name of Rousseau beneath the picture of the odious impostor, René.

One conclusion, to the credit, in so far as it goes, of the editors of the printed *Memoirs*, may be deduced from these dishonest alterations of the manuscript they professed they had not altered. We have seen that Michaud, Suard, Barbier and Brunet, as admirers as well as publishers of the works of the Encyclopædists, did, undeniably and by their own admission, work together to produce a reversal of the contemporary judgment

passed upon Rousseau. And in view of the fact that they hunted up and reproduced libels which they knew had been refuted, and dealt dishonestly with, and gave false reports about, contemporary documents that they had in their possession, and were well qualified to estimate at their true value, it is impossible to suppose that these defenders of the "great men of the eighteenth century," in their estimation (viz. the Encyclopædists), honestly believed in the justice of their cause. At the same time, to appreciate their motives correctly, we must recognize in these clever bibliographers and collectors and makers of books, not the deliberate continuators of a plot, but the unscrupulous apologists and champions of *les philosophes*, of Diderot and of Grimm especially, whom their inherited intellectual and personal sympathies taught them to regard as *the* philosophers of the eighteenth century: who had suffered in public esteem chiefly on account of their ill-treatment of Rousseau, and of his charges against them, made in his *Confessions*.

The fact that J. C. Brunet and his assistant-editor, Parison, did not understand the scheme of the original conspirators is the best proof we could have that they were, if not innocent, at any rate ignorant, patrons of this carefully-planned enterprise; whose success nevertheless they helped to make exceed probably the hopes formed by its authors. The *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay*, as Brunet gave them, certainly conquered a stronger belief in their veracity than could have been won by the *Letters of Madame de Montbrillant*, had they been honestly reproduced from the manuscript. At the same time, certain sacrifices had to be made to maintain the claims of the work to historical exactitude.

Thus we discover when examining the manuscript that the whole of the ninth volume of more than two hundred pages, which represents the conclusion of the novel, has been entirely suppressed by the editor of the

printed *Memoirs!* And yet, from both a literary and a critical point of view, this last portion of the original work deserved attention.

Readers of Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs* will recollect that the book ends abruptly, after a letter addressed to Madame de H—— at Geneva, where Madame d'Epinay gives her reasons for not desiring the publication of her two little books *Mes Moments Heureux* and *Lettres à mon Fils*, which had been printed for private circulation among the friends of the authoress.

"Here end the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* (*Ici finissent les Mémoires de Madame Epinay*)," affirm the editors: and they aggravate the deception practised upon their readers by a long note, wherein they express regrets that the authoress has not carried her story further.

True, Boiteau, in his preface to the second edition of the *Memoirs*, writes that J. C. Brunet admitted to him that the original work did not end as the printed book does; but he states that Brunet affirmed that the conclusion was a hastily patched-up affair, better omitted for the sakes both of author and of reader.

"What would certainly have displeased every one," wrote Boiteau, basing his remarks upon what J. C. Brunet had told him, "was the manner in which Madame d'Epinay, at the end of her own stock of adventures, breathless and exhausted, invented an ending for the novel. For instance, *Grimm becomes blind, and his mistress takes care of him, like a sister of charity.*"

The invention here is on Brunet's side; Madame d'Epinay has no part in it. It is not true that, having brought her heroine, Madame de Montbrillant, back from Geneva, the authoress has exhausted her stock of adventures; inasmuch as she carries on her history vivaciously through a volume of two hundred pages. Nor by way of a conclusion does Volx—Grimm's counterpart—become blind; nor does Madame d'Epinay make herself for his sake a sister of charity.

What actually happens is entirely different. Madame de Montbrillant takes up life after her return from Geneva in a very decided, not to say an aggressive spirit. This is the result of the invigorating influence upon the once too amiable and generous lady of the judiciously tyrannical Volx. Cured of her old culpable disposition to live on pleasant terms with every one, Madame de Montbrillant does battle with every one, with her husband first of all, and then with every separate member of the family, about money affairs.

Monsieur de Montbrillant (like his counterpart, M. d'Epinay) loses his charge of Fermier-général, as a result of his reckless extravagance. Then all the heroine's former friends and acquaintances shamelessly neglect her; no one comes through the test satisfactorily, except of course, Volx and Garnier. Milord Wilx (that is to say, the Baron d'Holbach) and his wife; the Countess de Lange and her lover the Marquis Dulaurier (Madame d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert); the heroine's brothers-in-law, the Count de Lange and M. de Ménil (*M. d'Houdetot and M. de Jully*)—all these people, who represent precisely the group of private friends to whom, by J. C. Brunet's account, Madame d'Epinay was in the habit of reading her *Memoirs* aloud in the closing years of her life—are painted as time-serving and treacherous worldlings who abandon the poor lady they had once flattered and caressed, the moment fortune ceases to smile upon her.

One understands the necessity for suppressing a portion of the work which proved that it was not composed for the entertainment of Madame d'Epinay's private friends: but for the abuse of every one whom Grimm had quarrelled with. But an even stronger necessity existed for ignoring the last episodes of the work, which no amount of doctoring could reconcile with the actual circumstances of any of the historical personages whose names Brunet had restored to Madame de Montbrillant, to Garnier, to Volx, and to René.

The conclusion of the novel is the death of Madame de Montbrillant, broken-hearted; as the result of her separation from the incomparable Volx. This virtuous and even severe paragon has, nevertheless, a tendency to pleasantry, especially in correspondence with his friends; and a letter of a purely private character containing a joke at the expense of the unsuccessful Commander-in-Chief,[1] seized by the police, is made the excuse for a charge brought against him as a foreign spy, sending out of the country defamatory accounts of French generals. Such an accusation to this Soul of honour seems more bitter than death! He is secretly advised by his protector, the Dauphin, that he had better fly to England until public indignation has cooled down, and when, perhaps, he may get a chance of being heard and of justifying himself. "*Moi? obligé de me justifier? Et de quoi?*" demands the outraged paragon. After many protests, however, and heartrending scenes with Madame de Montbrillant and with Garnier, the incomparable Volx starts for England. And Madame de Montbrillant commences (with a fainting fit) a very long and, it may be admitted, tedious, method of dying; which affords her the opportunity of delivering the confession of faith of a *femme-philosophe*, to compare with the last speech of the *bigote* Julie in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. As for the faithful Garnier, he watches by Madame de Montbrillant's bedside, and receives her dying breath. And then he himself abandons the soil of France; and with his wife and daughter, settles in England; where he makes it his business thenceforth to watch over the miserable Volx, and to prevent him, in his profound despair, from taking his own life.

It will be recognized that the conclusion of the work cannot be reconciled with the theory that Madame d'Epinay was the "slave of truth;" or that her novel represents the authentic memoirs of her life. But no excuse is to be found for the peremptory blotting out of

[1] The Duc de Broglie.

these chapters because they interfere with an impression that the authoress herself evidently did not intend to produce. Let it be admitted that the incomparable Volx might have taken with more calmness and composure the misunderstanding of his harmless joke; and that one does not feel profoundly touched by the tragic scenes which precede his flight to England. Let it be granted, too, that there does not seem enough reason for a lady who had weathered so many storms, and had got over so many love affairs, as the heroine, to die of a broken heart: and that even if the winding up of the novel made it necessary the heroine should die, it was not necessary she should take so long in doing it. But if we allow that the editor of the *Memoirs* had a right to abbreviate Volx's lamentations and Madame de Montbrillant's agony, he had no right to leave Volx in France nor Madame de Montbrillant alive.

And although the last two hundred pages of the manuscript are not the best part of the work, it would be a mistake to suppose that the critic can afford to neglect them. In this sort of transformation scene that winds up the story, it is true that Volx, Garnier and Madame de Montbrillant lose all resemblance to Grimm, Diderot and Madame d'Epinay; but they take on an unmistakable resemblance to three imaginary personages who are familiar to us. In other words, readers who know their *Nouvelle Héloïse* cannot doubt, if they study the last volume of the manuscript, that an attempt is made to outdo Rousseau in his own domain; that we are intended to accept the devoted Garnier as a type of the noble friend who throws Milord Edouard into the shade; and Volx and Madame de Montbrillant as a pair of lovers, more pathetically interesting than Julie and Saint Preux.

* * * * * *

We have now to recognize all that has been done and

proved for our new criticism by the discovery, the comparative study, and the examination into the true history, of these manuscripts. First of all—in connection with Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs*.

It is proved that this work, accepted by modern critics as supplying Madame d'Epinay's account of the quarrel between Rousseau and his old friends, and as furnishing evidence that must be weighed against the statements of the author of the *Confessions*, does not contain Madame d'Epinay's original story. The Arsenal and Archives manuscript shows that this original story was "re-written from the commencement" in accordance with a plan dictated to Madame d'Epinay by Grimm and Diderot. The manuscript of the Rue de Sévigné Library shows that the story in the printed *Memoirs* (that is to say, the story weighed as evidence against Rousseau's statements by modern critics) has been further falsified by the first publishers of the book.

In other words, all arguments derived from the supposed agreement between the separate accounts of Rousseau's conduct by Madame d'Epinay, and by the Encyclopædists, fall to the ground: and all judgments based upon belief in the essential veracity of the *Memoirs* are proved to have false foundations.

Secondly, in connection with the conspiracy against Rousseau,—it is proved that this conspiracy existed.

The different manuscripts of Madame d'Epinay's posthumous work and the history of these documents, help us to find the instrument carefully prepared by the conspirators to hand down to posterity their libellous portrait of the man they hated.

Here, again, arguments, refuted by the evidence afforded by these documents, have become out of date. It is not permitted, in view of this evidence, to describe any longer as "extravagant," or "improbable," the notion that men in the position of Grimm and Diderot would have had the malignity, or have taken the trouble,

deliberately to conspire against Rousseau, with the purpose of fabricating for him an entirely false reputation. It is proved that they had the malignity, and that they did take the trouble.

The existence of the plot being an established historical fact, and the instruments used by the conspirators having fallen into our hands, we have now to examine upon what plan the instruments were constructed, and for what purposes they were used.

PART III

THE MYTHICAL JEAN JACQUES

"L'artificieux scélérat"

CHAPTER I

THE MYTHICAL "ARTIFICIAL SCOUNDREL," JEAN JACQUES

We know that the central idea of the conspirators was to lend Rousseau the character of a sophist and an impostor.

But there was one supreme difficulty in the way. His independent and simple life lay open to the world. Here was a philosopher who, unlike others of the same fraternity, practised what he preached. He preached independence and the freedom found by manual toil: and he earned his bread by the trade of a copyist of music. He taught that the patronage of men of letters by wealthy or high-placed personages interfered with the free expression of opinions: and he refused all patronage, and even the pension offered him by the king. He maintained that happiness is not found in the pursuit of fame or in the distractions and obligations of the worldly life: and at the height of his celebrity, eagerly sought after by society leaders, the very first use he made of his power to regulate his life in the way that best pleased him, was to abandon Paris, and to settle down in the country to an existence of tranquil meditation and labour, out of reach of the disturbing excitement of cities.

How was it to be maintained of such a man that when he praised simplicity of manners and a natural life in his writings, he was a hypocrite and an impostor?

Only one way lay open to the calumniators. The key to this mystery they declared to be the craving of an ambitious man for notoriety. Falsity was the essential characteristic of this prophet of truth. And, consequently, by one plan only could the riddle of his true

tastes and motives be solved. *One had to take exactly the opposite of what he said, did, and wrote; and in this way one arrived at a true knowledge of his character.*

Thus, Rousseau always maintained that until the epoch of his celebrity he had received kindness and affection from all the men and women with whom, at different periods of his career, he was associated. He affirmed that his early manhood spent in Savoy, at Annecy, Chambéry and Les Charmettes, was the happiest period of his existence. His days of vagabondage—days of romantic adventure and freedom, which compensated, to a boy enamoured of nature and liberty, for hardships and privations—ended when he was twenty years of age. During eight or nine years afterwards, he says, followed an interval when there were few events to relate, because his life (first of all in employment of the Government Survey Office, and afterwards as a teacher of music) was "as simple as it was happy."

"This uniform existence," he says, "was precisely what I needed to form my character, which constant changes and troubles had prevented from becoming settled. It was during this precious interval that my mixed and interrupted education gained consistency: and that I was made what I have never ceased to be behind the shifting clouds of circumstances that awaited me."

He had led a sociable, as well as a tranquil, existence during these years. Madame la Baronne de Warens was still well seen by the "good society" of Chambéry; and her protégé, the young musician from Geneva, was made welcome on his own account, as well as out of regard for his patroness.

"The ready welcome, the friendly spirit, the easy good-nature of the inhabitants of this country made their society delightful; and the pleasure I took in it proves to me that if I do not like to live amongst men, the fault is less in me than in themselves."

But the purely delightful memories of these years

LES CHARMETTES

"La maison était très logeable—au devant un jardin en terrace : une vigne au-dessus, vis-à-vis un petit bois de

centred themselves in the summer months spent at Les Charmettes, the solitary little cottage amongst the mountains, where Rousseau had only the society of the adored Madame de Warens, and the companionship of his own thoughts and of nature.

"Here," he declares in the *Confessions*, "commenced those peaceful but transient moments which have left with me the right to say that I have lived. Precious and ever-regretted moments! Oh, begin once again for me this delicious period; and flow more slowly, if it may be so, through my memory, than you passed rapidly through my real existence! But how should I know how to prolong for my readers, without wearying them, the touching and simple recital of things that to myself it is never wearisome to dwell upon? . . . I rose with the sun, and I was happy; I went out to walk, and I was happy; I saw 'Maman,' and I was happy; I left her, and I was happy. I wandered amongst woods and solitary hillsides; I loitered in valleys; I read; I did nothing; I worked hard in the garden; I gathered fruit; I gave a hand in the household; and everywhere happiness went with me, for it was in no assignable thing—it was in me: and did not quit me for one moment."

Such an interval as this in the momentous epoch between twenty and thirty, when impressions had the vigour of youth and the fulness of manhood, established in Rousseau the inalterable faith that shines out in his writings, in happiness—not as a vague and hardly to be obtained possibility—but as a condition natural to man, and the fulfilment of his true destiny.

With this faith in his heart, Rousseau, at twenty-nine years of age, was thrown into a world which had lost belief in many things, and in happiness especially, as either possible, or the thing to be chiefly desired in a society where to become famous, wealthy, powerful, admired, were the accepted goals of human destiny. But even though a stranger in this world, Rousseau was not received by it unkindly. Here, too, if we take his own

word for it, he had no reasons to "complain of either fate or men." "A young man of passable appearance and some show of talent, who arrives in Paris," says the author of the *Confessions*, "is sure of being well received. *I was:* although it did not lead to great things." It led, at any rate, to his reading a memoir to the Academy of Science upon his new system of musical annotation; to many compliments: and a certificate accorded him by the Academy; and, of especial importance, it led to visiting amongst academicians and men of science and men of letters, which gained him the acquaintanceship of the intellectual leaders of the epoch; so that, as he says himself, when he became one of them, he did not enter their ranks as a stranger. Then, through the interest taken in him by two duchesses (Duchess de Besenval and Duchess de Broglie), he obtained the post of secretary to the French Ambassador at Venice. The ambassador, M. de Montaigu, behaved badly to him; but during his stay in Venice, Rousseau formed many honourable friendships, and he returned to Paris conscious, he says himself, that he possessed some talent. Others also showed themselves conscious of it. In 1745 Voltaire wrote to him about certain alterations in music and words of the *Princesse de Navarre*, which through the influence of the Duc de Richelieu had been entrusted to Rousseau, 15th Dec., 1745.

"You unite, sir," wrote Voltaire, "two talents which until now have existed separately. Here are two good reasons for me to esteem you, and to desire to love you. I am only sorry that you should have to employ these talents on a work which is hardly, I fear, worthy of them. Some months back, M. le Duc de Richelieu ordered me to produce, in the twinkling of an eye, a small and bad sketch of some insipid scenes, which had to be fitted on to a musical accompaniment not made for it. I obeyed him literally. I wrote these scenes very quickly and very badly. I sent this wretched sketch to M. de

Richelieu, thinking he would not use it, or that I should be able to correct it. Happily it is in your hands. You are absolutely master of it; I have entirely lost sight of it. I have no doubt you will rectify the faults necessarily existing in a mere sketch thrown off so rapidly, and that you will fill in details and do everything that is required."

It was in this epoch, when the first man of the century wrote to him in these terms, that Rousseau became the secretary of Madame Dupin and of her stepson, M. de Francueil. He was their friend, as well as their secretary. M. de Francueil confided to him his most intimate secrets. He introduced Jean Jacques not only to his wife, but also to his mistress Madame d'Epinay. As for Madame Dupin, she is one of those who deserve the title of Rousseau's "old friend." Her attachment to him, formed before he went to Venice, continued the same throughout the changes of fortune that befell him: and the constant kindnesses she unostentatiously did him, never led her to assume with him the airs of a benefactress.

It has been necessary to sum up these leading facts because, taking the legend of Jean Jacques Rousseau given by Grimm and Diderot, and the story told in Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs*, we find (as we should expect) the very opposite of all this. Rousseau, before the epoch of his celebrity, had a wretched existence; the hardships and misfortunes he underwent had soured his character, and especially the humiliations inflicted upon him by Madame Dupin, left him embittered against the wealthy and prosperous!

"One of M. Rousseau's chief misfortunes," [1] wrote Grimm, in the *Correspondance Littéraire*, "is to have reached forty years of age before discovering his own talent. *He was unlucky all his life; and because he had reason to complain of fate, he complained of men.* This injustice is common enough in people who to

[1] June, 1762.

timidity of character join superlative pride. . . . In the midst of all these failures, he attached himself to the wife of a farmer-general once famous for her beauty. The humiliations and restraints he endured in this position contributed not a little to embitter his character."

Diderot also speaks of Rousseau as embittered, soured by his early misfortunes. This professed believer in happiness and goodness as conditions of the simple life was a cynic and a misanthrope.

Rousseau again affirmed that in his intercourse with Society people he was forced to use his own tone of straightforward simplicity with them, because he invariably committed blunders, and became involuntarily guilty of rudeness, if he attempted to employ the artificial complimentary tone of their own world.

Grimm said the opposite of this: Rousseau's simplicity and brusqueness were affectations: and he was skilled in the complimenter's art. It was only after he became famous that, having "nothing natural about him," he assumed the rôle of a cynic.

"Up to this date," wrote the editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire* (June, 1762), "he had been full of compliments, gallant and exquisite; his manners were even too honeyed, and tiring by excessive politeness. Then, suddenly, he put on the mantle of a cynic, and, having nothing natural about him, he carried this, too, to excess. But when dispensing his sarcasms he knew how to make exceptions in favour of those amongst whom he lived; and how to hide under a rough and cynical tone a good deal of the old flattery, and art of paying delicate compliments, especially in his intercourse with women."

Again, the author of the *Confessions* affirmed that his talent as a writer entirely depended upon the strength of his convictions, and the interest he took in the subject dealt with. He had no eloquence of a purely literary character at his command; but language came to him as the fervent expression of the enthusiasm

for ideas that showed him a nobler and a happier destiny for mankind.

Diderot and Grimm asserted the opposite: Rousseau could only be eloquent when his purpose was to make the worse appear the better reason.

"Jean Jacques is so born for sophistry," wrote Diderot, "that the defence of truth expires in his hands. It would really seem that to support his own convictions would kill his talent. His desire is not to be truthful, but eloquent; not clear, but fluent; not logical, but brilliant; not to enlighten, but to bewilder and dazzle his readers."

"M. Rousseau's great defect," Grimm repeats, "is that he is never natural; another even graver fault is his constant bad faith. He seeks less to speak the truth than to say and do differently to other people." [1]

Rousseau's professed avoidance of patronage with his adoption of the trade of a copyist, was a "second folly," or rather, "falsity," of this man, "vain as Satan" by Diderot's account. In view of the undeniable fact that Rousseau *did* follow this trade, the only method was to declare that he was so bad a copyist, and so dilatory, that those who employed him were only benefactors in disguise. As for his independence, Diderot affirmed that, although he posed as more disinterested than other men of letters, he accepted and solicited from them secretly pecuniary assistance, "*tous les secours de la bienfaisance;*" and although he declined to accept a pension from the King of France, he did not hesitate to become the secret pensioner of a woman (Madame d'Epinay) whom he spoke evil of, when he was living at her expense.

By Grimm's assertion also, Rousseau never honestly earned his bread, as he professed to do, by copying music.

"When putting on the livery of a philosopher," wrote Grimm, "M. Rousseau quitted Madame Dupin,

[1] *Correspondance Littéraire*, July 1, 1762.

and made himself a copyist of music; *pretending* to follow this trade like a simple workman, and to earn his living by it, for one of his follies was to speak ill of the author's trade, *whilst in reality he followed no other.*" [1]

Rousseau said of himself that his temperament and early experiences (it should be remembered that he was twenty-nine when he left Savoy) made a country life so necessary to his happiness that, during the fifteen years spent at Venice and in Paris, he had never ceased to feel himself an exile; and never renounced the wish and intention, as the goal of every effort to improve his personal fortunes, to find a tranquil retreat; where, out of sight of the miseries and vices of city life, he could freely commune with his own spirit and with nature and thus gain power to carry through the serious literary projects that he contemplated.

But here again the "old friends," who claimed to be the only people qualified to understand him, maintained the opposite. No one was less suited than Rousseau for a country life, and to no one were Paris, and the animation and adulation he found there, more necessary. So that when, out of a spirit of contradiction, and to make himself the talk of the town, he buried himself alive in his Hermitage, "his heart became sour, and his morals corrupt."

"One does not grow better in woods," affirmed Diderot, "with the character he took there, and the motives which led him there. . . . Let him denounce the corruption of the city as much as he pleases, he burns to inhabit it. Let him shut the window of his Hermitage which opens in the direction of Paris, it is the only place he sees. In the depths of his forest he is elsewhere, he is in Paris."

Grimm tells the same story. "Solitude and the habitations of woods suited no one less than a man so hot-headed and of such a melancholy and an impetuous temper," wrote the editor of the *Correspondance*

[1] *Correspondance Littéraire*, June, 1762.

Littéraire. "He became an absolute savage there. His brain grew more heated, his temper embittered against himself and all his friends. And at the end of a few months he quitted his forest, at war with all mankind."

Here, then, we have in outline, the sketch of the mythical Jean Jacques of the legend, who serves as the model for the newly constructed portrait of René in Madame d'Epinay's story, which has been "re-written from the commencement." Who does not recognize in the René who is to throw consternation and bewilderment into the candid soul of Madame de Montbrillant, by the bizarre theories which he defends in their walks and conversations,[1] the "man so born for sophistry," as Diderot has it, "that the defence of truth expires in his hands"? Who can fail to recognize in the René who has much taste for women, and who is gallantly brusque,[2] the artificial cynic, whose chief defect is that he is never natural, and who, under his mask of rough sincerity, knows how to practise his old art of flattery, especially in his dealings with women? Who, again, does not recognize in the prophecy uttered by Volx, before René takes up his abode in the cottage on the borders of the wood, about the effect upon a man of his hot head and impetuous and melancholy temper, of solitude and a country life, the same ideas and the same phrases employed in 1762 by the editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire* when he recorded the results of Jean Jacques' residence in the little cottage he had "persecuted" Madame d'Epinay to give him?

Both Sainte-Beuve and Mr. John Morley, accepting as a prophecy the speech as it stands in the *Memoirs*, praise Grimm's sagacity in foreseeing exactly what would be the results for Rousseau of his abandonment of Paris in 1756, to take up his abode in the country retreat prepared for him by Madame d'Epinay.

Recognizing that, after twenty months, Rousseau left

[1] See note, page 94. [2] *Idem.*

the Hermitage, having quarrelled with all his self-styled "old friends," does the fulfilment of Grimm's prediction prove his sagacity? or *his resolute endeavour to bring about the thing predicted?* In other words, was the cause of the quarrel the effect produced upon Rousseau's temper and imagination by solitude and the habitation of woods? or was it the effect produced upon the tempers and imaginations of other people, by Grimm's mischief-making?

As for the effect upon Rousseau's temper and imagination of his abandonment of Paris and his return to a country life, made congenial to him by natural taste and force of early associations, he has told us himself, in the *Confessions*, what it was. It meant not only his recovery of equanimity and sympathy with mankind; but the liberation of his genius from the disturbing influences of false advisers and a repugnant philosophy. In the first place, it had been, he admits, the mingled anger and compassion stirred in him by contact with a world unlike his own, which had awakened his sense of a vocation: and as a result of this commotion within him, he produced the two *Discourses*. But it was only when he had escaped from this strange world, and returned to his own world, that he actually found his vocation: and was "able to communicate himself to others in his full stature and proportion." And these communications, delivered in the six years that he spent at Montmorency, were the *Lettre à d'Alembert*, the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, the *Contrat Social* and *Emile*.

But if this series of masterpieces stands to prove true Rousseau's own account of the effect upon his mind and imagination of his return to a country life, we are given as proof of the demoralization of his character and of the souring of his temper by solitude and the habitation of woods, the story of a series of abominable actions committed by him during this period, which cost him all his friends.

The history of these "abominable" actions, supposed to have been committed by J. J. Rousseau during his residence at the Hermitage, represents the legend handed down in the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay* as the story of René. The false hermit, false philosopher, and false friend of the story not only has all the features of the sophist and impostor painted elsewhere by Grimm and Diderot, but he perpetrates also the seven deadly sins (*les sept scélératesses*) laid to Rousseau's charge by Diderot, and stated by him to have been the cause of the rupture between Jean Jacques and his former friends.

M. Maurice Tourneux has the credit of having discovered and printed for the first time from Diderot's "*tablettes*," the record noted down there of Rousseau's supposed "crimes." But we have heard of these useful "tablettes" kept by the director of the *Encyclopædia*, from his contemporary and biographer, Mercier, Grimm's latest assistant upon the *Correspondance Littéraire*.

In his essay entitled *Aux Manes de Diderot*, written in 1784, Mercier gives this curious example of the Encyclopædist's difficulty in remembering injuries; and of the still more curious sense of duty which compelled him to cultivate in himself, not this happy forgetfulness, but an artificial memory of the wrongs done him.

"It was in perfect good faith," wrote Mercier, "that Diderot declared he found in himself a disposition to love all his fellow-men until he discovered some special cause for despising them. Even when he had only too just cause of complaint against people, he ran a great danger of forgetting their misdeeds. This must have been so, since *whenever he considered himself seriously bound to recollect offences*, he had imposed upon himself the rule of noting them down on some tablets dedicated to this use. But these tablets remained hidden in a corner of his desk, and the fancy of consulting this singular record occurred very seldom. I only saw him

refer to them once—when he was relating to me the wrongs done him by the unhappy Jean Jacques."

Here we have this singular record as M. Tourneux has reproduced it :

LES SEPT SCÉLÉRATESSES DE ROUSSEAU.

"The citizen Rousseau," pronounced Diderot, "has committed, at one and the same time, seven crimes that have alienated from him all his friends.

"He wrote against Madame d'Epinay a letter, which is a prodigy of ingratitude.

"This lady had established him at La Chevrette ; and there supported him, his mistress, and the mother of his mistress.

"He intended to return to Geneva, when Madame d'Epinay's health compelled her to go there ; he did not even offer to accompany her.

"He accused this lady of being the wickedest of women,[1] at a time when he was falling on his knees before her, and imploring her pardon, with tears in his eyes, for all his faults. This is proved by the date of a letter I wrote to him, and also by the testimony of all those who knew Madame d'Epinay.[2]

"He spoke of Grimm as a profound scoundrel, at the same time that he attempted to get reconciled with him ; and made him the judge of the case between himself and Madame d'Epinay. And when he was asked what Grimm had done to deserve these furious invectives, he replied that this man had spitefully endeavoured to take away from him the custom of those who employed him as a copyist ; and notably that he had taken away the custom of M. d'Epinay.

"He accused Madame d'Epinay, at the very time when he owed everything to her, and was living at her expense, of the scheme of separating M. de Saint-Lambert

[1] *D'être la plus noire des femmes.*

[2] The letter Diderot means is of October, 1759. See page 272.

from Madame d'Houdetot, and, to help this scheme, of having endeavoured to seduce the little Levasseur, and persuade her to steal one of the letters Rousseau wrote to Madame d'Houdetot, or one of her answers to his letters; and of having said to the Levasseur: 'If this is found out, you can take shelter with me, and there will be a fine commotion.'

"This fine gentleman, Rousseau,[1] had fallen in love with Madame d'Houdetot, and to advance his own ends, what did he do? He endeavoured to awaken in this woman scruples about her passion for Saint-Lambert!

"He accused Madame d'Epinay of having either told herself, or got some one to tell, Saint-Lambert about his passion for Madame d'Houdetot.

"Embarrassed at the results of his own behaviour with Madame d'Houdetot, he summoned me to the Hermitage, to know what he had better do. I advised him to write the whole story to Saint-Lambert, and for the future to avoid Madame d'Houdetot. This counsel pleased him, and he promised me that he would follow it.

"I saw him shortly afterwards. He told me he had followed my advice, and thanked me for a counsel that only a good friend like myself could have given him, and which restored his self-respect.

"But nothing of the sort had he done! Instead of writing to M. de Saint-Lambert in the way we had decided, he had written an atrocious letter, to which M. de Saint-Lambert said one could only reply with a stick.

"Having started for the Hermitage, to find out whether he was mad or wicked, I accused him of the malicious desire to stir up a quarrel between M. de Saint-Lambert and Madame d'Houdetot. He denied it, and to justify himself, drew forth a letter from Madame d'Houdetot, a letter which proved exactly the treachery I accused him of! He blushed, and then

[1] Literally, Le sieur Rousseau.

became furious; for I pointed out to him that the letter said what he denied.

"M. de Saint-Lambert was then upon active service with the army. As he is a friend of mine, he came to see me upon his return. Being persuaded that Rousseau had written to him in the way we had agreed upon, I spoke to him about this adventure, as of a thing he knew even better than I did. But not at all. He knew only half the story; so that, as a result of Rousseau's falseness, I fell into an indiscretion.

"But what did the infamous Rousseau do then? He accused me of having betrayed him! of having violated the faith of the confidence he had reposed in me! And he published the note upon this subject, that may be seen in the preface to his work against the theatre; and that, although he knew perfectly well I was no traitor, not even indiscreet, but that he himself was false and had deceived me.

"I reproached him with having written to Saint-Lambert in a different way to the one we had chosen. To that, he replied that he had some knowledge of characters; and that what might do well with one person, did badly with another.

"Then I reproached him with having deceived me, by leading me to believe that he had written in accordance with my advice. To that he made no reply whatever.

"His note is a tissue of villainies. I have been on friendly terms with this man for fifteen years. Of all the proofs of friendship that one man can give another, there is not one that I have not given him; and on his side, he has never shown me any. He himself has sometimes been ashamed of it. Often I have grown pale over his works; he admits it, but only partially. He does not say all he owes to my care, to my counsels, to our talks, to everything. And his last work is to a great extent an attack upon me. He praises d'Alembert in it, for whom he has no esteem, neither as a writer nor

yet as a man. He praises Madame de Graffigny, whom he does not respect either as a woman of letters, or as a woman. He attacks pathetic comedy, because that is my own style. He professes to be pious, because I am not. He drags the dramatic profession through the mud, because I have said I love it. He says that he once believed in uprightness without religion, but that he now recognizes this as a delusion, because, despised by all who know him, and *especially by his friends*, he would not be sorry to make them appear knaves.

"It follows from all this, that this false man is vain as Satan, ungrateful, cruel, hypocritical, and malicious; all his apostasies from Protestantism to Catholicism, and from Catholicism to Protestantism, without belief in anything, sufficiently prove it.

"One thing always offended me in his conduct towards me, the slight respect he showed me before others, and the proofs of esteem and docility which he gave me when we were *tête-à-tête*. He copied me, employed my ideas, and affected to look down upon me!

"In truth, this man is a monster! After having quarrelled with Madame d'Epinay, he made friends with her mortal enemies, Mdlle. d'Ette and Duclos.

"He embraced me in the very moment when he was writing against me. He said he hated all those who served him, and he proved to me that his words were literally true.

"The end of it all is, that he stands alone. His note is all the more vile, because he knows I could not reply to it without compromising five or six persons.

"Once when we were talking together, he wished to sit up late, but I asked his advice about a phrase, and directly he said: 'Let us go to bed.'

"(Signed) DIDEROT."

The approximate date of this document is established by the allusion in it to the *Lettre à d'Alembert* as

Rousseau's "last work." The Letter appeared in November, 1758, and *Emile* and the *Contrat Social* were published in 1762. So that it must have been in a period between these two dates that Diderot, to avoid the great "danger of forgetting these misdeeds," noted them down on his "tablettes." It must have been at least eight years later that Mercier saw him consult this singular record; for it was not until 1770 that the young Swiss from Zurich became assistant-editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire.* It was probably later still when Diderot must again have brought out his tablettes, *to supply the list of the most important changes that were to be made in Madame d'Epinay's fable of René.*

The task that now has to be carried out, is to examine the charges made by Diderot in comparison both with ascertainable facts, and with the notes and corrected cahiers of the manuscripts of Madame d'Epinay's work. We shall find that the results of this inquiry will be the establishment of the facts: 1. that the seven crimes laid to Rousseau's charge represent so many calumnies against him; 2. that these calumnies re-appear to-day in the *Memoirs,* as alterations made in the original text in accordance with notes dictated by Diderot and Grimm.

But before entering upon an inquiry where the result will be the complete exoneration of Rousseau from all the charges made against him, we have to observe the absence from Diderot's list of "crimes,"—from the story planted in *Madame d'Epinay's Memoirs,*—and from Grimm's malicious biographical sketch of Rousseau, secretly circulated at the time of the condemnation of *Emile,* of all mention of the one act in his life that posterity, until recently, was justified in describing as a crime. In my *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau,* I published the evidence which enables us to see this act in a new light, and to determine the precise amount of moral blame that remains with Rousseau for

the supposed abandonment of his children. In a work where the purpose is to clear Rousseau's reputation from false charges and wrong impressions, it is so important that this evidence should be stated, that it seems to me necessary to reprint this study here.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF EVIDENCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE LEGEND OF JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU AND HIS CHILDREN [1]

THERE is one episode in Rousseau's life that has been made the subject of much moralizing, but of very little careful investigation. Enemies and admirers alike have taken it for granted that the *Confessions* give a literally true account of Rousseau's behaviour to five children, born to him by Thérèse Levasseur. He says that these five infants were sent, immediately after their birth, to the "Enfants Trouvés," and he also states that, whilst he learnt afterwards to deplore the abandonment of his children, he regarded his fault, in this matter, as an "error, and not as a crime."

A crime, nevertheless, and one of the blackest dye, such an act must be called, if Rousseau's behaviour actually were what the popular modern conception supposes it to have been. Nor, in a case of such gravity, are we free to take the position assumed by some of Jean Jacques' advocates. They would have us pass the incident over lightly, as a deplorable fault committed by a great man, who must be admitted to have behaved badly upon this occasion; yet who does not forfeit by one regrettable action all the gratitude due for his services to mankind. We cannot dismiss carelessly an episode of such importance. We are bound to recognize that the whole question of Jean Jacques' sincerity depends upon the true explanation of this mysterious chapter in his

[1] Reproduced from my *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau* (with some additional notes, and an account of fresh researches amongst the Registers at the Enfants-Trouvés.—See Appendix, Note E.

life. It remains to be seen whether a careful examination of all the chapter contains will leave us with the popular modern impression, that Rousseau treated his children, and the mother of his children, with "a selfish ferocity, below the instinct of the brute." That is Lamartine's forcible description of Rousseau's conduct, and the terms are not too strong, if the facts were as Lamartine represents them, and, as it is generally assumed, the author of the *Confessions* himself admitted them to have been. If Jean Jacques actually *were* guilty of this crime, if he did *tear his newly-born babes from the arms, the breast, the tears of their mother*,[1] and cause them to be exposed in the cold streets, to perish unless public charity came to their aid in time, then there is no other conclusion possible for us than that, with all his fine talk of natural obligations, and natural rights, he was what his poet-critic calls him—a *Tartuffe of humanity.*

Nor, *if* he were guilty of these enormities, is the case of this unnatural monster made any the better by the fact that he did not himself recognize that he had been guilty of "selfish ferocity," and that he had the moral obliquity to describe his abominable action as "an error of judgment, not a crime." There are some actions so atrocious in themselves that the worst that can be said of any man is that he was able to commit them in sincerity of heart, and without any sense of their odiousness. It is evident that, for seven years, Rousseau knew no uneasiness of conscience, and when repentance came to him, it was more in the form of poignant regret for a mistake he had made, than of overwhelming remorse for a detestable crime. If then he could regard as a trifling fault the trampling down of natural feelings of compassion and the infliction, upon the woman he had made a mother, of the deadliest wrong a male tyrant could deal a female slave, this man, who appealed so eloquently to the

[1] *J. J. Rousseau: son faux Contrat Social et le vrai Contrat Social.*—Lamartine.

hearts of others, must, himself, have been callous and cruel, and one who assumed the mask of sensibility to conceal his true lack of the ordinary instincts of humanity.

There is one difficulty, however, in the way of this conclusion.

If Jean Jacques Rousseau were in truth the unnatural monster he is supposed to have been, then *he cannot have been the only monster.* By some strange caprice of circumstances, he must have found himself surrounded by a group of men and women, all as deficient as himself in natural instincts, all as callous to the feebleness of infancy, all as blind and cold to the natural claims that belong, by virtue of its "great pains and perils," to the estate of motherhood. Indeed, the perversion of these men and women, who were Rousseau's enthusiastic admirers and devoted friends, must have been deeper than his own. No excuse of self-interest is to be found in the case of these personages, many of them wealthy and high-placed, for their affection and patronage extended to an abominable man, whom they knew to be perpetrating a series of cowardly crimes, that should have made him an object of loathing to every honest soul. For these very years (1747 to 1755), that cover the period when alone the births and abandonment of Thérèse's children could have happened, are the years belonging to the brief epoch of Jean Jacques' social popularity. Even before the publication of the *Discourse upon the Arts and Sciences* (1750) made him famous, the "citizen of Geneva" was welcomed in philosophical circles, and sought after in fashionable salons, as Diderot's chosen friend, and the petted *protégé* of two charming women of the world, Madame Dupin and Madame d'Epinay. But Diderot, Madame Dupin and Madame d'Epinay were all acquainted with Rousseau's secret, and were at the same time in the confidence of his supposed victim, Thérèse Levasseur.

"The arrangement I had made for my children," says

Rousseau, "appeared to me so right, so sensible, so just, that if I did not openly boast of it, it was solely out of consideration for the mother. But I told it to all those who knew of our *liaison*. I told it to Diderot, to Grimm; I told it later on to Madame d'Epinay, and later still to Madame de Luxembourg. Whilst I was thus making confidences on my side, Madame Levasseur was also making hers, but with less disinterested motives. I had introduced her and her daughter to Madame Dupin, who, out of friendship for me, showed them a thousand kindnesses. The mother told her daughter's secret. Madame Dupin, who is kind and generous, and who did not know how careful I was, notwithstanding the smallness of my means, to provide them with everything necessary, looked after them with a liberality which, by her mother's orders, the daughter concealed from me through the whole time of my residence at Paris, and only confessed to me some time afterwards, at the Hermitage. . . . I did not know that Madame Dupin was so well informed; she never gave me any sign of being so."[1]

In other words, Madam Dupin's friendship for Rousseau was in no way chilled by Madame Levasseur's revelations. Nor did his own confession of the state of affairs between himself and Thérèse, to Madame d'Epinay, and, later on, to the Duchess of Luxembourg, interfere with the affectionate enthusiasm these ladies bestowed on him, in the days when he enjoyed their favour. Even Diderot, the severe moral censor, who, later on, made it the first duty of friendship to warn the unrepentant Jean Jacques of his backslidings from the path of virtue, even Diderot does not seem to have ever remonstrated with Rousseau upon his tyrannical treatment of Thérèse, and his cruelty in robbing her of her children! On the contrary, we are forced to conclude that, if the self-righteous philosopher did not positively approve of Jean Jacques' conduct

[1] *Confessions*, pt. ii., liv. viii.

during these years, he saw nothing to blame in it. He vouchsafed his friendship to this unnatural father, at any rate, and was ready to praise his private virtues, as well as his distinguished talents. Jean Jacques only ceased to be virtuous, for Diderot, when he withdrew from Paris in 1756, and exchanged the ennobling influences of philosophic circles for the demoralizing atmosphere of a country life, and the proofs that Diderot then brings forward of Rousseau's moral decline have nothing to do with his behaviour to his children.

One other singular circumstance needs to be borne in mind. If Rousseau and Rousseau's friends were alike dead and blind to the inhumanity of tearing newly-born babes "from the arms, the breast, and the tears of their mother," that mother herself, the pitiable victim of these repeated acts of barbarity, appears to have been as unconscious as her tyrant was, that any especially odious injustice and wrong had been inflicted upon her. This is all the more strange, because Thérèse Levasseur was no patient Griselda. Friends and enemies alike describe her as a woman of quarrelsome temper, always full of her own grievances, and stirring up sympathetic irritation in Rousseau's mind by telling him of the slights and insults offered her by his friends. On the other hand, she was also ready to narrate to these friends the story of her trials with Rousseau; of the straits she was put to through his penurious habits, of the dulness she suffered from, etc., etc. And yet, neither on the occasion of any quarrel with Jean Jacques, nor in the course of any confidential lamentations over his peculiarities, do we learn that Thérèse taunted or reproached him with having robbed her of her children. If indeed this grievous wrong had been done her, what generosity, what magnanimity of soul, what almost superhuman self-restraint, does not this lifelong silence imply in a woman who, by all accounts, was undisciplined in temper, unguarded in speech, and mean and despicable in soul.

In our re-examination of this important episode in Rousseau's life, two questions are involved.

There is first of all the question of facts. What do we actually know of Rousseau's behaviour to Thérèse, and to his children? And what evidence have we that these children were ever sent to the "Enfants Trouvés"; or, for that matter, were ever born?

And, secondly, there is the question of Rousseau's moral character. What is the amount of blame that belongs to him, in the case that these children were actually disposed of in the manner he imagined; or, again, in the event, that he was guilty in will only, and not in deed, of their abandonment?

Now it is evident that whilst the last question is the one of chief importance, the answer we shall make to it must depend upon an impartial effort to solve the first. Rousseau's moral responsibility, of course, is the matter with which we are chiefly concerned. Still, until we have sifted the facts, we are not in a position to decide what his motives and the influences at work within and around him really were. What if the result of a careful re-examination of all information available be to leave us with a large amount of negative evidence, all tending to show that Rousseau did not send his children to the "Enfants Trouvés," for the simple and sufficient reason that these children, outside of Rousseau's imagination, and the audacious fables invented by Thérèse Levasseur, had no real existence?

Even so, of course, Rousseau must be held morally responsible for his intentions.[1] But these intentions,

[1] I would ask that attention may be given to these statements because some critics of this study have used against me the very assertions that I have here emphatically made! *Rousseau is morally responsible for what he intended to do and believed he had done.* But he could not have believed that he tore infants from the mother's arms if there were no infants in the case. Nor could he have imagined that he carried these infants off concealed in the folds of his cloak, as Lamartine describes; nor if Thérèse played off this

also, require to be studied in a new light. And we possibly may discover that the expressions of repentance for his conduct given in the *Confessions* are not, after all, so inadequate; and that he has not judged his own fault too leniently when he describes it as an "error of judgment" rather than a crime; since, in acting as he did, he believed himself to be keeping in view his children's interests.

The first point we have to recognize is that the only evidence we have in this matter of any weight, is afforded by Rousseau himself. But for his own statements, in the *Confessions*, the *Réveries*, and in his letters to Madame de Francueil and to Madame de Luxembourg, there would be no more reason for believing that he had sent his children to the Enfants Trouvés than there is for supposing that he allowed Thérèse's mother to die of starvation;[1] that he stole the music of his opera, the *Devin du Village;*[2] or that he once acted

trick upon him, could she have ventured upon very strong or forcible appeals to the hard-hearted father's compassion; for in what an embarrassing position would she not have found herself, had the paternal instincts of Jean Jacques responded to the appeal, and had he suddenly decided to see his children.

[1] *Sentiments des Citoyens.* From 1743 to 1758 J. J. Rousseau supported Thérèse's mother in the same way and under the same roof as her daughter; and after he had discovered that she was false to him and in secret communication with his enemies, he still contributed to her support, although he would not let her live with him (see *Conf.*, pt. ii, liv. ix. p. 265; also liv. xi. p. 354).

[2] *Devin du Village.* In April, 1763, the *Journal Encyclopédique* insinuated that Rousseau had appropriated for this opera the music he had found amongst the papers of one Gauthier, a musician who died at Lyons in 1687. In October, 1780, two years after Jean Jacques' death, the same journal and the same writer put forward a different account; and this writer, Pierre Rousseau, of Toulouse, states that in 1750, before the appearance of *Devin du Village*, he was aware that one Granet, an obscure musician then alive, had composed the music for Jean Jacques' words. But if Pierre Rousseau knew in 1750 that Granet had been robbed, why did he in 1763 accuse his namesake of having stolen the papers of Gauthier? See my *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, p. 162.

as a commercial traveller to a lace merchant, and robbed his employer of the goods and money entrusted to him.[1] All these calumnies were circulated in much the same way; and all, at the time, obtained the amount of belief claimed by anonymous libels. It is important to observe that the charge of having abandoned his children was never brought against Jean Jacques by those amongst his contemporaries who had been his friends and intimate associates during the years when these events, if they took place at all, must have happened. Although these friends became afterwards Jean Jacques' relentless enemies, and did their utmost to spread other evil reports concerning him, this particular evil report was not started by them; nor even, when once started, did it receive their support. The venomous little pamphlet, *Le Sentiment des Citoyens*, published anonymously by Voltaire in 1765, contains the only definite accusation ever brought against Rousseau in his lifetime of having committed this particular crime. But Voltaire had no personal knowledge of the facts of Jean Jacques' private life. The materials he had worked up to sensational pitch in this libel must have been derived from his recollections of the scandalous gossip that had been confided to him in 1758, by Madame d'Epinay and M. Melchior Grimm, when the lady and her cavalier visited Geneva, fresh from the interchange of bitter letters that had ended their intercourse with Rousseau.[2] No doubt, in discussing the

[1] Bachaumont's *Mémoires Secrètes*, July, 1766. Unnecessary to say that Rousseau never was a commercial traveller, that he never was in Flanders, and that the whole story is a gratuitous invention.

[2] In 1758, and before the publication of the *Lettre à d'Alembert*, in which Rousseau wrote against the establishment of a theatre at Geneva, Voltaire's tone with Rousseau is friendly, if somewhat condescending. Even after the *Lettre à d'Alembert*, Voltaire shows no distinct animosity, until Rousseau, with his usual incapability of hiding or expressing in moderate terms some perhaps quite passing fit of irritation, writes to Voltaire the imprudent letter of June 17, 1760, in which occur the words, "Vouz avez perdu Génève pour le

atrocious character of a man they knew Voltaire detested, Madame d'Epinay and M. Grimm may have allowed themselves the luxury of gratuitous lying as well as the privilege of lending some colour of fancy to actual facts. However this may have been, and whether the blame belonged to the inspirers or the author of the libel, its extreme virulence defeated its own purpose. Even Jean Jacques' enemies were, or professed to be, scandalized. What was more, any truth these charges might have contained was so overloaded with falsehood that the man attacked was able to give a categorical denial to every one of them; and by the general public, at any rate, his denial[1] that he had ever "exposed" or "caused to be exposed" his newly-born infants, was accepted as literally as his assertion that he had not allowed Madame Levasseur to die of starvation, inasmuch as she was at that hour alive and living upon a pension supplied by him; and that he was not suffering from a hideous malady, the result of his debaucheries, but from a constitutional infirmity that made the dissipation he was accused of impossible.

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prix de l'asile que vous y avez reçu; vous avez aliéné de moi mes concitoyens. Je vous hais enfin puisque vous l'avez voulu—mais je vous hais en homme encore plus digne de vous aimer." Voltaire, so accustomed to flattery and to be addressed in tones of adoration, never forgave or forgot this phrase. Henceforth, no trouble is too great, no method too mean, for him to take in order to hurt the man who has ventured to "hate him."—See Appendix, Note G.

[1] It has often been assumed that when Rousseau denied having "exposed" his children, he was merely quibbling over words, in a manner not worthy of his respect for truth. But in his sight the exposition of infants, that would have meant risk to their health and life, was an altogether different action to the one he believed he had committed. In his letter to Madame de Francueil, written in 1751, he says, "Ce mot d'Enfants Trouvés vous en imposerait il comme si l'on trouvait ces enfants dans les rues, exposés à périr si le hasard ne les sauve? Soyez sure que vous n'auriez pas plus d'horreur que moi pour l'indigne père qui pourrait se resoudre à cette barbarie. Il y a des règles établis—informez vous de ce qu'elles sont et vous saurez que les enfants ne sortent des mains de la sage femme que pour passer dans celle d'une nourrice."

An anonymous article contributed to the *Journal Encyclopédique* of December, 1790, is sometimes quoted by way of showing that Rousseau's abandonment of his children was known to his contemporaries; and that therefore his acknowledgment of his fault in the *Confessions* was merely a pretended revelation of what he had no power to conceal. As a matter of fact, however, this letter goes to show that if Rousseau had not accused himself, no one would have believed his accusers. The anonymous writer is criticizing Ginguené's *Lettres sur les Confessions*, and especially the statement that Rousseau need not have betrayed the secret of his behaviour to his children had he not felt morally bound to do so.

"Let me be allowed to observe," so the letter runs, "that vague rumours, issuing from M. Rousseau's own household, were more widely known and more difficult to stifle than M. Ginguené supposes. Accident had lodged me in the Rue Grenelle Ste. Honoré, opposite the house in which M. Rousseau had rooms on the third storey. A barber kept the shop on the ground floor, and he became my own. I have always dreaded the chatter of his tribe, and to protect myself against it, provide myself with a book. This precaution, however, brought me into mischief. One day I had with me a work of M. Rousseau, and, behold, my *garçon* launched—informing me that he knows the author well; and is a friend of his housekeeper, whom he pities from his heart because the children she has had by her master are barbarously sent to the Enfants Trouvés. *I did not believe a word of it, and bade him hold his tongue; and my esteem for M. Rousseau would still have prevented me from believing this, if his own avowal had not confirmed the fact.* All I would have M. Ginguené remark is, that a fact divulged in such a way could not have been omitted from the *Confessions; and that it appears the housekeeper made the less mystery of the matter because she could hope, by publishing it,*

to compel her master to do what he held back from, viz. legalize their union." Exactly so. But if even we believe this statement of an anonymous writer, made twelve years after Rousseau's death and more than forty years, certainly, after the events referred to, all that is shown is that Thérèse told a barber the same story we know she disclosed to many other persons. The writer points out, correctly, that Thérèse had her own ends to serve in making known her relations to Rousseau—but he, also, proves that the rumours about the abandonment of his children were not believed; and that they would not have been accepted as true, after his death, if Rousseau had not confirmed them in his *Confessions*. The first six books of the *Confessions* were published in 1780—two years after the author's death; and then for some ten years, until the enthusiasm of some of the Revolutionary leaders for Jean Jacques struck terror into the hearts of his calumniators, these former "friends" of his had the field to themselves; and D'Alembert,[1] Diderot,[2] Grimm,[3] and Marmontel,[4] enjoyed

[1] D'Alembert makes his *Eloge de Milord Maréchal George Keith*, published in 1779, the occasion for accusing Rousseau of ingratitude towards one of whom he speaks always with reverence and love: and who was so far himself from considering Rousseau undeserving of his friendship, that, dying just before Jean Jacques, he left to him the watch he always wore, and which actually was handed over to Thérèse.

[2] Diderot, in a note to his *Vie de Sénèque*, 1779, calls down execration on a man who leaves behind him memoirs in which "honest men" are pitilessly torn to rags by a vile hypocrite who during fifty years has deceived the world. "Détestez," exclaims the indignant Diderot, "l'ingrat qui dit du mal de ses bienfaiteurs; détestez l'homme atroce qui ne balance pas à noircir ses anciens amis; détestez le lâche qui laisse sur sa tombe la révélation des secrets qui lui ont été confiés, ou qu'il a surpris de son vivant." Whilst he is about it, why does not Diderot ask us also to detest the man who abandoned his children?

[3] Grimm. On the death of Madame d'Epinay, 1783.

[4] Marmontel, 1778, insinuates that Rousseau merely took the line he did in the *First Discourse* upon Diderot's advice; and hence that the account given in the *Confessions* is false, and that Rousseau himself did not feel any strong convictions such as he professes.—See Appendix, Note B.

full freedom to attack the dead man whose life they had helped to embitter. But even so, we are struck by the fact that no fresh information upon this point is supplied by these competent witnesses.

We shall presently have to see how much the singular reticence of these men, upon this particular matter, would seem to imply. For the present, it is sufficient to say that since the account given in the *Confessions* was accepted in silence by these well-informed personages, who would not have hesitated to enlarge the narrative, if they had seen their way to increase the sum of Rousseau's guilt, we may presume that the *Confessions* do not paint Jean Jacques' conduct in a too favourable light. It is necessary to realize this fact, and to establish plainly that *Rousseau's contemporaries, and the generation that followed, did not profess to improve upon the narrative of the "Confessions," nor to derive their information from any other source*, since modern popular conceptions of Rousseau's behaviour to his children, and the mother of his children, are based upon a legendary story invented some fifty years ago, the one that owes its existence, in the first instance, to the poet Lamartine. In order to understand clearly what the real charge consists of, it will be well, to begin with, to get rid of this fabulous matter and of the purely gratuitous additions that have been made to the historical narrative.

"Thérèse Levasseur," Lamartine condescends to explain to us,[1] "was for Rousseau a pretty slave, of whom he made a concubine, or a housekeeper, at pleasure, for the comfort of his obscure life, but with whom he would recognize no tie more binding than his own caprice. That caprice over, for the seduced girl there would remain only the risks of indigence, and the cares of maternity:—but no! even the sweet and bitter fruits of maternity were not left her, to sweeten her life, to

[1] *Jean Jacques Rousseau: son faux Contrat Social et le vrai Contrat Social*, p. 55.

console her misery, to sustain her age! We know that, with a selfish ferocity below the instinct of the brute, *Jean Jacques waited at the foot of Thérèse's bed for her infant to be born; and that then, regularly, for six or seven years, he carried off, concealed in the folds of his mantle, to the Hospital for Lost Children, the babes torn from the arms, the breast, the tears of their mother.* We know further that, with a refinement of prudence, this unnatural father took from his poor infants every token that might serve to identify them by and by, and to bring back to him the onerous charges of paternity. And whilst he was accomplishing these acts almost of infanticide, with an affectation of sensibility worthy of a Tartuffe of humanity, he was vehemently denouncing, in his writings, the abominable conduct of mothers who neglected to suckle their own infants!"

The last sentence shows some culpable negligence in examining dates and in stating facts in their proper order. It was in the *Emile* that Rousseau, amongst other efforts to recall the men and women of his generation to a sense of the duties and joys of family life, endeavoured to convince young mothers of the perils of handing over their infants to hired nurses who could feel none of the devotion inspired by nature. But the *Emile* was published in 1762, that is to say, not at the time when Rousseau was deserting his children, but at the time when he was endeavouring to atone for the fault[1] he had learned to deplore, by a public recantation of the theories that had misled him. He had allowed himself to be persuaded that, in his case, it was better his children should owe their maintenance to the State, than that they should be nourished at the cost of their father's dishonour, and the betrayal of his principles—or, else, be exposed to the poverty and possible misery that were the

[1] "En méditant mon trâité de l'Education je sentis, que j'avais négligé des devoirs dont rien ne pouvait me dispenser. Le remords enfin devint si vif qu'il m'arracha presque l'aveu public de ma faute au commencement de l'Emile." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. xii.)

necessary conditions of intellectual independence, for a penniless writer, at a time when only the demoralizing patronage of men in power made the profession of letters a paying concern.[1] And here it is not irrelevant to the subject to consider Rousseau's position, and the state of his fortunes, at the time when he arrived at these convictions. The late Professor Darmesteter in an interesting article contributed to the *Reveu Bleue*, on the Castle of Chenonceau, gives Jean Jacques that royal place of abode during the time when in the intervals of his not very onerous duties as Madame Dupin's secretary, he is supposed to have amused his leisure by writing the *Emile*, and sending off Thérèse's children, periodically, to the Enfants Trouvés. Now the *Confessions* tell us that Jean Jacques did pay a short visit to Chenonceau in 1746 and a second visit in 1747, and that it was after his return from the first visit, that Thérèse informed him of her expectations. The *Emile* was written thirteen years after these events at Montmorency, in the small summer-house at Mont Louis, where often the ink froze on the writer's pen, in winter. But poor as were Rousseau's circumstances at Montmorency, they were prosperous and assured when compared with his position during those years when the faults that blot his memory must be placed. His true place of abode, at this time, was one room in the Rue Platrière, near Madame Dupin's house, whilst out of his

[1] "Vous connaissez ma situation : je gagne au jour la journée mon pain avec assez de peine. Comment nourrirais je encore une famille ? Il faudrait donc recourir aux protections, à l'intrigue, au manège, briguer quelque vil emploi, enfin me livrer moi-même à toutes les infamies pour les quelles je suis penétré d'une si juste horreur ? Non, Madame ! il vaut mieux qu'ils soient orphelins que d'avoir pour père un fripon."—Lettre à Mde. de Francueil, April 20, 1751.

"Je comprends que le reproche d'avoir mis mes enfants aux Enfants Trouvés a facilement dégéneré avec un peu de tournure en celui d'être un père dénaturé et de haïr les enfants : cependant il est sur que c'est la crainte d'une destinée pour eux mille fois pire et presque inévitable par toute autre voie qui m'a le plus déterminé dans cette démarche."—*Rêveries Neuvième Promenade.*

not very princely income of thirty-seven pounds a year, paid him by Madame Dupin and M. de Francueil, conjointly, he had to provide a lodging for Thérèse at the other end of Paris. It was not until two years after the visit to Chenonceau, and the, alleged, birth of his first child, that, his income being raised to fifty pounds a year, he was able, with some assistance from Madame Dupin, to furnish two small apartments in the Hôtel de Languedoc, Rue de Grenelle Saint-Honoré, where Thérèse and her mother came to live with him, professedly as his housekeepers. It is not difficult to understand how a man so situated, and whose principles made it impossible for him to improve his precarious fortunes, might, unconsciously, allow the practical difficulties of his position to lend their weight to the opinions he openly professed at this time, that the education of all children by the State, and in ignorance of their parents, was the only method of securing equality of chances to all men, and the just establishment of differences of rank upon differences in natural gifts and personal merit. But in his *Emile* he puts aside all these plausible arguments, with a word. A State education is no longer possible, because the State, in its ancient sense, has no longer any existence. It is on the family, on its mutual duties and obligations, recognized and securely established, that the health and honour of society, in the present day, must be founded. As for the practical difficulties, or public duties, permitted to stand in the way of the recognition of these natural claims, Rousseau pronounces them forms of moral cowardice, and self-deceit.

"Whoso cannot fulfil a father's duties," he says, "has no right to become one; no poverty, no work, no respect for the world's opinion, can exonerate a father from the duty of nourishing and educating his children. Reader! you may take my word for it; I prophesy for any man in whom the heart lives, and who puts these sacred duties behind him, that he will for long years weep bitter tears over his fault;

and that he will never be consoled for it." [1] These are not the hypocritical utterances of a "Tartuffe of humanity," preaching what he does not practise. They are the hardly-veiled acknowledgments of a heartstricken man who has himself put these duties behind him, and who knows, albeit too late, the sorrow for his fault that cannot be consoled.

But the error of making the publication of the *Emile* a simultaneous event in Rousseau's life with the abandonment of his children, may show simple carelessness. It is difficult to speak so indulgently of the distortion of facts practised by Lamartine when describing Rousseau's treatment of Thérèse. This "pretty slave" whom he made "his concubine or housekeeper at pleasure," and with whom he "would recognize no tie more binding than his caprice," was the woman to whom he showed a devotion, that never varied during the thirty-five years their union lasted, a devotion that was broken merely by his death. So far from being willing that Thérèse should be exposed to the risks of indigence, Rousseau, in his dread of any such peril for her, lost his indifference to pecuniary interests, and took precautions to secure her a pension from his publisher Rey ; and even, on her behalf, departed from the rule he so scrupulously followed himself, and gratefully accepted, for her, Lord Marshal George Keith's contribution to this pension.[2] As to the

[1] *Emile*, liv. i., p. 37. It should be remembered, on the other hand, that Rousseau was addressing a society where parental duties were entirely ignored, by those precisely whose wealth and position rendered them especially able to fulfil them. The custom of sending away infants immediately after birth to be brought up in some peasant's family until the fifth year, was almost universal amongst people of position. Then followed the Convent for girls, the Jesuit College for boys. In the case of illegitimate children, during the reign of Louis XV., no obligation of any sort was recognized. Louis XIV. had legitimatized his offspring by various mothers ; but the children born at the Parc au Cerfs were sent to the Enfants Trouvés.

[2] "Ne pouvant exercer directement avec moi sa gratitude il voulut me la témoigner au moins donc ma gouvernante à la quelle il (Rey)

preposterous picture of the sinister Jean Jacques, hovering like an evil bird of prey at the foot of Thérèse's bed, ready to pounce upon the feeble wailing infant the instant after birth, and to rush off with it to the Enfants Trouvés, this is a flight of fancy that soars not only beyond any evidence we have, but beyond the possibilities of the case. *Rousseau says that he never saw his children.*[1] They were born at the house of the midwife, whither Thérèse retired upon these interesting occasions; and it was this midwife who afterwards undertook to depose them at the Enfants Trouvés, in "the usual way."[2] Lamartine has not been at the pains of discovering what was "the usual way" of obtaining a child's admission into the "Enfants Trouvés" in the middle of the eighteenth century. He is writing under the impression that the convenient "tour," or revolving gate, through which any one could pass the body of an infant, and depart unobserved, was already in existence. This humane device, however, for putting a stop to the exposition of children in the streets was not established at the Paris Institution until after the Revolution. In Rousseau's day, although the exposition of children was no longer a practical necessity, it was assumed to have taken place. The person who found—or who professed to have found—the infant, was bound to carry it to the office of the nearest Commissary of Police, where a formal

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fit une pension viagère de trois-cent francs. Cette pension fut une grande ressource pour l'entretien de Thérèse et un grand soulagement pour moi. Elle a toujours disposé de tout elle même . . . quelque simplement que Thérèse se mette jamais la pension de Rey ne lui a suffi pour se nipper que je n'y aie supplée du mien chaque année" (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. xi.; also *Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. xii. Correspondence: letter to Mdme. de Luxembourg asking for protection to Thérèse in case of his death, June 12, 1761; to Duclos, August 1, 1763).

"Je pouvais comptais sur une subsistance honnête et pour moi et après moi pour Thérèse a qui je laissais 700 francs de rente tant de la pension de Rey que celle de milord Maréchal." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. xii.)

[1] *Confessions*, pt. ii., liv. vii. [2] *Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. vii. p. 553.

document, a procès verbal, was drawn up, stating the place and hour of the child's discovery.[1] Information on this point can be obtained from M. Lallemand's *Histoire des Enfants Abandonnés* : " A l'origine," says M. Lallemand, " tous les enfants étaient exposés dans le sens réel du mot. C'est seulement au milieu du dix-huitième siècle que se généralisent les abandons directs, par les nourrices, les sages femmes, ou les parents. On peut affirmer que vers cette époque (1736) les personnes qui ont trouvé un enfant l'apporte, habituellement, à l'Hôtel du Commissaire de leur quartier. *Il faut remarquer que jamais avant* 1791 *un enfant ne fut reçu dans cet établissement sans un procès verbal, dressé par l'autorité compétente.*"

Although, as has been said, very few difficulties were placed in the way of any person applying for such a procès verbal, still it was necessary to present one's self at the police station, to submit to certain more or less formal interrogatories ; and to offer some explanation of a sort concerning the discovery of the child. If even we had not been told in the *Confessions* that he never saw his children, nothing would be more improbable than that Rousseau should have himself undertaken these preliminary formalities ; whilst it was quite in the manners of the time that, when the convenience of parents required it, these duties should count amongst the professional services of the midwife.[2]

[1] " De l'ordonnance de Nous, Charles Daniel de la Fosse, Avocat en Parlement, Conseiller du Roi, Commissaire, Enquêteur et examinateur au Chatelet de Paris, préposé pour la Police au Quartier de la Cité : a été levé un enfant . . . nouvellement né, trouvé à la salle des accouchées de l'Hôtel Dieu lequel nous avons à l'instant envoyé á la couche des Enfants Trouvés pour y être nourri et allaité en la manière accoutumée.

" Fait et délivré en notre Hôtel ce mil sept cent. . . .

" Heure d' . . . "

This formula continued the same throughout the eighteenth century. M. de la Fosse was the Commissary during the period with which we are concerned.

[2] " Les sages-femmes prirent l'habitude de se rendre à l'Hôtel des

Again, so far from its being true that this unnatural father took from his poor orphans every token that might serve to identify them, we have the account of the token devised by Rousseau, and given by him to Thérèse, to place amongst the eldest child's clothing; and if on the succeeding occasions Thérèse did not carry out the plan thus suggested to her, and agree with Mdlle. Gouin upon some sign that would serve to identify each of her five children, we must conclude, if we accept the story of the Enfants Trouvés at all, that she was even more willing than Rousseau was, not only that her infants should be left there, but that they should be left there in such a way as to be lost to her for ever, beyond hope of discovery.

But if Rousseau never saw his children, and the whole business of their abandonment was left in the hands of the midwife, of Thérèse's mother and Thérèse herself, what becomes of the pathetic picture of these infants "torn from the arms, the breast, the tears of their mother"? It is true that Rousseau, whose effort to screen Thérèse from all blame in the matter is sufficiently evident, says that she was unwilling to part with her children. But apart from some show of regretful emotion, only decent under the circumstances, what proofs have we of any real resistance on Thérèse's part; or of any objection on her side to revive with almost phenomenal rapidity the condition of things that, in the course of some seven years, necessitated the desertion of five children?

Rousseau himself fixes the approximate date of the first of these events. It was, as we have seen, in the autumn of 1746 that he spent some months away from Paris—and Thérèse; enjoying the festive season at the Castle of Chenonceau, where he was the favoured guest of Mdme. Dupin and M. de Francueil, in the intervals

commissaires enquêteurs . . . le système primitif d'exposition est transformé et le délaissement dans la rue n'est plus qu'une exception." (*Hist. des Enfants Abandonnés*, de Lallemand, p. 160.)

of the services he rendered them in the capacity of their secretary. Upon his return to Paris, he was told by Thérèse of the coming event. He admits that, *at this time*, he did not take his own duties into serious consideration,[1] but decided off-hand that there was nothing for it but to act as other men of his acquaintance had done, under similar circumstances; and to send the child to the Enfants Trouvés. He adds: "The only scruples I had to overcome were those of Thérèse; and I had all the trouble in the world to persuade her to adopt the only plan for saving her honour. But *her mother, who also dreaded the worry of these new nurslings, having come to my aid, Thérèse allowed herself to be conquered.* A prudent and trustworthy midwife, named Mdlle. Gouin, was found, to whom to confide this business; and when the time came, Thérèse was taken by her mother to La Gouin's house, at the Pointe Ste. Eustache. I went several times to see her there, and took her a sign I had drawn in double upon two cards, one of which was placed amongst the infant's clothes; and he was left at the office of the Enfants Trouvés in the usual way. The following year, the same inconvenient circumstances arose, and were met by the same expedient, except for the sign, that was neglected. No more reflection on my side, no more approbation on the mother's—she obeyed whilst groaning over it."

By all means let Thérèse have the credit of her groanings. But it should be pointed out that, however

[1] In 1750, when he had become a leader of thought and a Reformer, he set himself to examine his conduct to his children by "the laws of nature, justice, and reason." "Si je me trompai dans mes résultats rien n'est plus étonnant que la sérenité d'âme avec la quelle je m'y livrai . . . je me contenterai de dire que mes raisons fut telle que je ne regardai plus mes liaisons avec Thérèse que comme un engagement honnête et saint quoique libre et volontaire . . . et quant à mes enfants en les livrant à l'éducation publique faute de pouvoir les élever moi même . . . je crus faire un acte de citoyen et de père." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. viii.)

profound they may have been, they took place *before her children were born.* Thérèse, then, went to Mdlle. Gouin's house fully aware, even on the first occasion, of what she was consenting to, and of all the arrangements made for her. What was more, between her own mother and the accommodating midwife, she was in no tyrant's hands. If, after her child's birth, her heart had failed her, and she had resisted parting with it, who was there, in Jean Jacques' absence, to compel her to a course that concerned, after all, chiefly herself? If she had chosen to give her child another destiny than the Enfants Trouvés, and to keep the matter hidden from Rousseau, no serious difficulties stood in her way. A woman of La Gouin's profession existed only for the convenience of parents. She could easily have placed the child out to nurse, if Thérèse had desired it; and the small pension that for some years would have been all that was necessary, could have been extracted as easily from Jean Jacques' friends, and from himself, as the sums Thérèse and Madame Levasseur obtained for their greedy family.

This is, supposing that Thérèse was afraid openly to disobey Rousseau's wishes. But we have abundant proofs that, as a matter of fact, she did not fear him in the least; and that she was quite ready, when it suited her own purposes, to set his wishes at defiance.[1] And

[1] "Quoiqu'on me cachât bien de choses, j'en vis assez pour juger que je ne voyais pas tout, et cela me tourmenta, moins par l'accusation de connivence, que par l'idée cruelle de ne pouvoir jamais être maître chez moi, ni de moi. Je priais, je conjurais, je me fâchais, le tout sans succès; la maman me faissit passer pour un grondeur éternel, pour un bourru. C'était avec mes amis des chuchoteries continuelles tout était mystère et secret pour moi dans mon ménage, et pour ne pas m'exposer sans cesse à des orages je n'osais plus m'informer de ce que s'y passait. Il aurait fallu pour me tirer de tous ces tracas une fermeté dont je n'étais pas capable." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. viii.)

"J'avais prié Thérèse de n'en faire venir personne à l'Ermitage, elle me le promit; on les fit venir en mon absence et lui fit promettre de n'en rien dire." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. ix.)

yet she made no attempt to conquer his affection and protection for her children, and on five distinct occasions, allowed her infants to be consigned to the Enfants Trouvés, without, in one single instance, risking the attempt, that every other young mother in her position would have made, of compelling the obdurate father to see, at least, his child! That Thérèse never made this attempt —that Rousseau never saw any one of his children— proves one of two things. Either Thérèse did not wish to bring up her own children, or else *there were no children of hers and Rousseau's requiring to be brought up.*

One reason for accepting the last alternative is that, if we take the first, we shall find ourselves compelled to regard Thérèse as more of a monster even than Rousseau's worst enemies have painted him. It is not only that for a mother to abandon without necessity her newly-born infants is a more grievous outrage against nature than for a father to repudiate the children whom he has not seen, nor learned to love; it is not even that Thérèse took no steps to secure the means of identifying and reclaiming her children—we are forced to believe, if we accept the circumstances as related by Rousseau literally, *that Thérèse must deliberately have thwarted his attempt to establish a clue to the first child's identity, by neglecting to place the card given her in the infant's clothing.* This is the only possible explanation of the complete absence of any such card, or of any mention of this card, from the carefully-kept registers of the Enfants Trouvés, *i. e.* the only explanation that is compatible with the belief that this child was ever placed there. Nothing could exceed the care with which every article of clothing, and every ribbon or scrap of paper found upon the infant at the time of its reception into the Enfants Trouvés was preserved. The reason for this extreme care was the same cause that led to the charitable carelessness shown, on the other hand, in accepting the statement made by any

person professing to have picked up a deserted child. The corruption of polite society, at this time, made the Enfants Trouvés not only a refuge for the infants of starving parents, or for the illegitimate offspring of poor and ruined girls; it was also a convenient hiding-place for the too palpable proofs of the sins and follies of the rich. Members of the very best society did not hesitate to use the Enfants Trouvés upon an emergency,[1] and it happened sufficiently often that the Establishment profited by the generous donations of these illustrious patrons, when some change of circumstances enabled them to reclaim and acknowledge a secretly treasured child. It was, then, plainly to the interest of the Managers of this Institution to use every effort to preserve scrupulously every token, or record, that could assist parents to identify their children, and serve to satisfy them that no confusion had taken place. The registers of the Enfants Trouvés during the eighteenth century are still in existence, and are carefully preserved in strong chests kept in the *greniers* of the present Hospice des Enfants Assistés, in the Rue de l'Enfert-Rochereau. Thanks to the kind permission of M. Brièle, Archivist of the Administration of Public Assistance, and to that of the Director of the Hospice, I have been allowed to examine these interesting records, and to verify the minute precautions taken for preserving the smallest piece of ribbon, medal, or slip of paper that might be found upon the infant at the time of its reception into the Enfants Trouvés. Nothing can be more pathetic than, in turning over these yellow leaves, to find frequently pasted on to the formal procès verbal, some scrap of writing or stamped card,

[1] The Comtesse de Tencin, mother of d'Alembert, caused him actually to be exposed on the steps of the Church of St. Jean le Rond, on the 16th of November, 1717. The procès verbal, drawn up on this occasion, by "Nicolas Delamare, Conseiller du Roy Commissaire au Chastelet," may still be seen amongst the registers of the Enfants Trouvés.

or perhaps the careful description of some token, or ornament, left with the infant for purposes of future identification. The plan followed was to preserve separately the original procès verbal, drawn up by the Commissary of Police who had first received the child. A copy of this document, with all that it contained, was entered in the registers of the Institution, under the number and name of the child concerned, and was also re-copied, and carefully sewn up in a sachet that was fastened round the infant's neck. When, as was generally the case, the child was sent into the country to be nursed and cared for, until its fourth or fifth year, the foster-mother received orders to preserve the precious sachet; and she forfeited payment if she failed to produce with the child the proofs of its identity. This system was practically so successful, that the registers are full of entries relating to the reclamation of children.

If even one of Thérèse Levasseur's children had been sealed in this way, the token, and the record of the token, must have been discovered in 1761, when the Duchess of Luxembourg, at Rousseau's prayer, caused a search to be made through the registers of the Enfants Trouvés. The *Confessions* establishes 1746, or the commencement of 1747, as the date of Thérèse's first visit to Mdlle. Gouin.[1] The circumstances of Rousseau's life make it impossible to suppose that there could have been any more of these visits, or any occasions for them, after he left Paris for the Hermitage in 1756; and when his life with Thérèse had henceforth spectators, with the bright eyes of Madame d'Epinay and the worldly wise ones of the Maréchale de Luxembourg. Thus 1754, or, at the latest possible date, 1755, must be taken as the limit of the period in which these five births are supposed to have taken place. Now, is it credible that, given the care with which the books of the Enfants Trouvés are proved to have been kept, no

[1] See Note E, Appendix.

trace should remain in 1761 of any entry applicable to any one of these five infants; all supposed to have been left with the Commissary by the same woman, who probably was living at this time,[1] and should have been able to give circumstantial evidence leading up to a discovery? If even in the case of the last four children it is possible to imagine that no distinguishing sign of identity could be established, there was the first child, who should have been easily traced by means of the duplicate card to the one still in Rousseau's possession. It must be remembered that the person making these inquiries on Rousseau's behalf, was the wife of a Marshal of France, and one of the greatest ladies of the day; not only so, this present Duchess of Luxembourg had behind her the reputation of the former Countess de Boufflers: that is to say, the reputation of the most immoral amongst the many immoral Court Beauties of her time.[2] The managers of the Enfants Trouvés, then, might easily have concluded that the Duchess had some especial and personal interest in the particular child, or children, whom she desired to trace. And who can doubt of their zeal to assist one who might prove so influential and generous a benefactress to their Institution? In spite of all this, nothing could be found. No procès verbal: no entry in the registers: no trace of Rousseau's duplicate card: no proof that any infant had been received under corresponding circumstances, at the Enfants Trouvés at all.

But the mysterious vanishing out of existence of these five infants, and of all traces of them, is not the only reason for concluding that they never entered existence. We have to weigh also the significant silence of Grimm and Diderot; both of whom according to the

[1] At the British Museum I have found a book entitled *Etat Actuel de Paris*, 1788, that gives a list of streets and inhabitants. At the entry 19, Rue Neuve Pointe Ste. Eustache, I find *M. Gouin, Agent des Villes de Provence.*

[2] See *Memoires de Bésenval.*

Confessions,[1] had been told by Rousseau of the destiny he had given his children. If these two most bitter enemies of Jean Jacques, who also enjoyed the confidence of Thérèse and of her mother, did not possess information concealed from Rousseau, it is difficult to explain why they should have refrained from betraying just this one secret; when they unhesitatingly published all others that could prove injurious to their former friend. It is impossible to suppose that any delicacy about revealing a confidential communication kept them silent. Upon other occasions, they showed no such delicacy. Rousseau's private letters to them, the stories of his boyish errors related to them in hours of expansion, his unlucky passion for the mistress of the Marquis de Saint-Lambert, and the miseries and scruples it gave him, his movements of impatience and his disturbing suspicions of Madame d'Epinay—all these confidences, from the very moment of their quarrel with their "friend," were published and given to the world. Even before any open rupture had taken place, Grimm, who owed his introduction to Diderot and to Madame d'Epinay to Rousseau, used these introductions to teach both the Encyclopædist and the lady to distrust the man who had given him all the acquaintances he knew how to make such good use of. Diderot's correspondence with Grimm proves that at a time when he professed to be still Rousseau's friend—"the only one left him"—he was writing of him behind his back in terms almost of loathing. After the quarrel there was no pretence of any respect for the past friendship; nor of confining the

[1] "Cet arrangement me parut si bon, si sensé, si légitime, que si je ne m'en vantai pas ouvertement ce fut uniquement par égard pour la mère: mais je le dis à tous ceux à qui nos liaisons n'étaient pas cachées, je le dis à Diderot, à Grimm, je l'appris dans la suite à Madame d'Epinay et dans la suite encore à Madame de Luxembourg, et cela librement franchement sans aucune espèce de nécessité et pouvant aisément le cacher à tout le monde; car la Gouin était une tres honnête femme très discrète et sur laquelle je comptois parfaitement." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. viii.)

attack upon Rousseau to questions connected with the immediate dispute.

Thus in his list of Rousseau's seven crimes, Diderot's zeal to prove his chosen companion and friend of other days "a monster," leads him to travel back five-and-thirty years to the time when Jean Jacques, at sixteen, let himself be converted from Protestantism to Catholicism, in order that he might find himself of the same faith as his adored benefactress, Madame de Warens. Diderot, anxious to make the most of this abominable "apostasy," says not one word about the age, or the circumstances, of the little run-away lad who committed it.[1] Upon other occasions this indictment shows the same excess of zeal in its endeavour to give a false and distorted account of comparatively innocent events; and its efforts to exaggerate faults of temper and self-control into enormous crimes. As a matter of fact, nothing very enormous, no *scélératesse* worthy of the name, is proved against Rousseau. But what is abundantly proved is the strong and fierce desire of the angry man who makes these charges, to use up every scrap of evil evidence he has, and so make the very most, and very worst, of it. How does it come about then, that, animated with this honest zeal to let the world know at last the atrocious character of the infamous Jean Jacques, Diderot should have forgotten, or intentionally omitted, all mention of the Enfants Trouvés? Here, one would have thought, was something nearer at hand and calling for more serious indignation than the change of faith of a lad of sixteen, for motives not wholly religious; a more mischievous crime than his sentimental love-making to Madame d'Houdetot, injurious to no one but himself; a sin of blacker dye than the exclamation,

[1] Diderot shows a complete forgetfulness, too, of a far more discreditable passage in his own past when he obtained 1,200 francs from a certain Frère Ange by the pretence of his desire to become a monk. Diderot was more than twenty at the time of this escapade. (See *Mémoires de Diderot*, Edition Tourneux, vol. i., p. xxxvi.)

"Come, let us be off to bed!" when Diderot proposed to read him one of his works in MS. Yet Diderot keeps his eyes steadily averted from the Enfants Trouvés. So do the other best-informed of Rousseau's enemies, who all prefer to exaggerate trifling faults and to invent imaginary crimes, rather than to give the world their personal knowledge of all the circumstances connected with Rousseau's inhuman barbarity to his children.[1]

What are we to conclude then, if not *that this knowledge, these active enemies of Rousseau jealously withheld, was favourable to him, and not the reverse?* A curious letter in the Supplément of the *Journal de Paris* for December 2, 1789,[2] throws some light on the subject. The author of the letter is Cerutti, who is defending the late Baron d'Holbach from the charge of having been unfriendly to Rousseau. According to Cerutti, Holbach was anxious to rouse the indolent Jean Jacques to fresh musical efforts; and therefore the Baron was in the way of insinuating in the presence of the author of the *Devin du Village* that this work was not his own. The unreasonable Jean Jacques, instead of recognizing the kind intentions of the Baron, took umbrage at these observations! Then Holbach, again animated by the most amiable

[1] Even when *Le Sentiment des Citoyens* appeared, Grimm, whom Voltaire would naturally have expected to support him, had nothing more to say of Jean Jacques' denial of the charge than—"Ceux qui ne se paient pas de mots, diront que nier n'est pas prouver." (*Corr.*, February, 1765.) Diderot and Grimm were in close alliance with Pierre Rousseau of Toulouse, editor of the *Journal Encyclopédique*, who was Voltaire's servile adulator. Yet Grimm and Diderot, who might so easily have enlightened Pierre Rousseau, let him commit the blunder of professing virtuous indignation at the libel. "Ne voudrat-on jamais séparer l'écrivain de ses opinions!" exclaims the deluded Pierre: "que l'on combatte les principes de M. Rousseau. Nous applaudissons aux citoyens et aux théologiens qui en le refutant cherchent à l'éclairer, mais nous respectons trop ses moeurs dont nous connaissons l'integrité pour ne pas le défendre contre toute imputation odieuse." (*Journal Encyclopédique*, April, 1765.)

[2] See page 32, Chap. II.

feelings, had joined with Diderot and Grimm in a friendly plot—"une conspiration amicale"—that had for its purpose (by his account) the separation of Rousseau from Thérèse Levasseur; since the union between his genius and an attachment so unworthy was absolutely too distressing a spectacle for his friends. Holbach does not appear to have explained to Cerutti in what this "conspiration amicale" actually consisted, but when we recollect the long and mysterious consultations between Madame Levasseur and Grimm, of which Rousseau speaks, and the private interviews between Diderot and Thérèse, that gave her the opportunity of imploring him to offer Jean Jacques those counsels of worldly prudence that were so badly received, we are disposed to conclude that the plot must have been *with* the Levasseurs, rather than against them. There is the suspicious circumstance too that Grimm, neither wealthy nor generous, paid a pension during many years to old Madame Levasseur, whose only apparent claim upon him was that she was the mother of the mistress of the man whom he detested. As Madame Levasseur was supplied by Rousseau with the necessaries of life, simple humanity could not have been the reason for M. Melchior Grimm's unwonted benevolence; nor, as Rousseau himself observes, could this old woman's conversation have possessed in itself so great a charm that Grimm could have found here a sufficient reason for the long and confidential interviews[1] he arranged with her. All this points to the existence of some common secret—to some services rendered by Madame Levasseur, that Grimm counted worth paying for; or some information he considered it necessary to bribe her to withhold. So far as Diderot is concerned, it was quite in his character to

[1] "Quand nous quittâmes Paris il y avait déjà longtemps que Madame Levasseur était dans l'usage d'aller voir M. Grimm deux au trois fois par mois, d'y passer quelques heures à des conversations si secrètes que le laquais même de Grimm était renvoyé." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. ix.)

"Le Père Berthier, y voyait souvent Madame Levasseur. Un

desire to benefit his friends by officious interference; and also by secret and elaborate plans to make them happy against their will.[1] We know that Diderot endeavoured to persuade Rousseau that his notion of giving up the lucrative post he owed to M. de Francueil's patronage, and of refusing the pension offered him by Louis XV., was insane folly.[2] Jean Jacques' notion of living upon his own earnings as a copyist of music, and not by any profits derived from his writings, was equally an offence in Diderot's eyes. Was not this pretence of

jour que je ne pensais à rien moins, il m'écrivit de sa part pour m'informer que M. Grimm lui offrait de se charger de son entretien et pour me demander la permission d'accepter. Je compris que la bonne vieille ne me demandait ma permission (une permission dont elle aurait bien pu s'en passer si je l'avais refusée), qu'afin de ne pas s'exposer à perdre ce que je lui donnai de mon côté. Quoique cette charité me parut très extraordinaire elle ne me frappa pas alors autant qu'elle a fait dans la suite." (liv. x.)

"Les longs et fréquents entretiens de Grimm avec Madame Levasseur depuis plusieurs années avait changé sensiblement cette femme à mon égard. De quoi traitaient ils dans ces singuliers tête-à-tête? La conversation de cette vieille était elle donc assez agréable pour la prendre ainsi en bonne fortune et assez importante pour en faire un si grand secret?" (liv. ix.)

[1] "Some of Diderot's benevolent schemes were certainly of a dubious character; there seems to linger about them a touch of the sanctification of means by ends which we may attribute to his Jesuit education. In his comedy *Est il bon? Est il méchant?* he has satirized himself in the person of the hero Vlardomir, a man who gets into terrible scrapes with his friends from the questionable devices by which he tries to serve them; obtaining, for instance, a pension for a widow lady by pretending that her child is illegitimate, and causing an obdurate mother to acquiesce eagerly in the marriage of her daughter by delicately suggesting she has been seduced. We find Diderot carrying on various benevolent little intrigues of this kind when we read his letters to Mdlle. Volland." (*The New Spirit*, by Havelock Ellis.)

[2] "Diderot me parla de la pension avec un feu que sur pareil sujet je n'aurais pas attendu d'un philosophe. Il ne me fit pas un crime de n'avoir pas voulu être présenté au roi, mais il m'en fit un terrible de mon indifférence pour la pension. Il me dit que si j'étais désintéressé pour mon compte, il ne m'était pas permis de l'être pour celui de Madame Levasseur et de sa fille." (*Conf.*, pt. ii., liv. viii.)

being more disinterested, and independent, than the men amongst whom he lived a sign of concealed arrogance? By all means let Rousseau protest against the corruption and falsity of the times—but why should he injure himself, and bring reproach upon those who did not care to imitate his imprudence, by refusing his share in the private favours that, to some extent, consoled men of talent for the reign of injustice? Had Jean Jacques the conceit to imagine that his solitary example was of such importance that it could change the customs of his time? or was he so much nobler a being, that what was moral and consistent enough to satisfy other high-minded philosophers (say Denis Diderot, for instance) was not sufficiently virtuous to satisfy him? This is the strain of argument that pervades Diderot's correspondence with Rousseau; and the Levasseurs are constantly being brought forward as persons who have a stronger claim upon his consideration than any high-flown principles. It was in keeping with this conduct that Diderot should have been willing to countenance a deception played off upon this impracticable man that might bring home to him a sense of the obligation he was under to live more like other people; and to sacrifice his absurd mania for consistency to considerations of common prudence and the interests of those dependent upon him. If Thérèse, by posing as an injured mother whose sacrifices were made necessary by this stupid obstinacy in the man who was her natural protector, could bring Jean Jacques to his senses, the fraud became a pious one; and Rousseau's friends had nothing better to do than to lend it their support. Let Thérèse force Rousseau to marry her—why not? Diderot himself had married a woman nearly as illiterate and coarse, and had found consolation for his wife's shortcomings in a lifelong flirtation with a better-born woman, all soul and sentiment. This course would be open to Rousseau also; and in the meanwhile marriage would compel him to look to the practical side of things; and

to give up his exasperating vow of poverty. It is not possible, of course, to say positively that this was the course of reflection followed by Diderot. What we do know is that he was one of the "friendly" conspirators who had entered upon *some* plot that was connected with Rousseau's relations to Thérèse; and that this plot certainly did not set itself the task of lifting any burthen of unnecessary self-reproach from Jean Jacques' shoulders, but rather of increasing that burthen, in order to compel him to prosper at the expense of his principles.

And, now, what could Thérèse's motive have been, if she deceived Rousseau in this matter?—and how could so stupid a woman have imposed so successfully upon one of the most gifted of men? The answer to these questions can only be given when we have examined Rousseau's relations to Thérèse, the nature of the sentiments he felt for her, and the causes of the extraordinary influence she undeniably exercised over him.

To understand the position thoroughly, we need to go back to the first meeting between Jean Jacques and Thérèse Levasseur, at the sordid little Hôtel Saint Quentin, in the year 1743. All we know of Thérèse, at this time, is that she was about two and twenty years of age, a girl of pleasant appearance and quiet manners, but with a blemished character and base connections. Her position at the Hôtel Saint Quentin was nominally that of needlewoman to the hostess; but the solitary girl was the object of the coarse pursuit of the frequenters of the tavern, who were encouraged, rather than checked, by the hostess, herself a woman of bad character. Of Jean Jacques at this time, we already know more. But it should be remembered that, in 1743, we do not know him, nor does he know himself, as the ardent prophet who feels inspired to reform a corrupt society by the force of principles, that he has first accepted, and resolved to put in practice himself. At this period of his life, Jean Jacques was far from feeling himself a

prophet. He was a disappointed dreamer, a man who at thirty-five years of age recognized that happiness, and his true life, lay behind him. His present surroundings were discordant, and he put no faith in the future; haunted as he was by vain yearnings after what reason told him could never be recovered, the freedom and peace of mind, the calm enjoyment of nature, the perfect human companionship, the beautiful sheltered home amongst the snow-crowned hills—all elements of the happiness that had died for him with a capricious woman's love. Two years had sufficed to wear out the transient fit of energy that had brought him to Paris with his New System of Musical Annotation, the wonderful system that, in the sanguine opinion of its author, was to win him fame and fortune, and—perhaps, forgetfulness of his spoiled romance, left behind him all withered and ugly at Les Charmettes. The New System of Musical Annotation had been rewarded by a Certificate of Merit; and had become a weariness even to its author. Eighteen months of practical experience as Secretary to the French Ambassador at Venice, had exhausted his sudden zeal for political usefulness; and the intellectual ambition his first contact with the literary coteries of Paris had awakened, was quenched by the discovery of the spiritual dryness concealed beneath the finished culture of the day; and of all the cruelty of this sparkling wit and play of minds, above the tragical decay of those sentiments and beliefs by which the soul of man has always been sustained. And now, weary of schemes of personal ambition, and of efforts to make his way in a world for which he felt he was not born, he had one only aim—to escape from Paris once and for ever. As a means to this end, his present purpose was to complete and sell the opera he had commenced, before his departure for Venice; and having thus established his reputation as a musician of merit, he intended to withdraw to some quiet town where he might live, as he had before done at Chambéry, as a teacher of music.

It was in this mood of profound discouragement that Fate ordained he should meet Thérèse. His first movement was only to protect from persecution a forlorn young creature, whose modest and timid bearing excited interest and pity. In Jean Jacques' sight Thérèse was a simple and innocent girl, who called for this service from any honest man, the witness of her defenceless state. But soon he became at once touched and attracted by the discovery that his chivalrous interference had won more than gratitude, and that the girl's shy but tender gaze dwelt upon him, and followed him when he moved. The simple Jean Jacques takes all this shyness and tenderness for what they appear. He does not think the worse of Thérèse because of her equivocal position at the Hôtel Saint Quentin, and he refuses even to hold her to blame when she acknowledges, with many tears, "a single fault" in her early girlhood, due to her ignorance, and the skill of a seducer. He warns Thérèse that he cannot marry, but offers her his protection, with the assurance that, come what may, he will never abandon her: and Thérèse is only too happy to accept these terms. A *liaison*, formed in this way, might easily enough in the life of a man destined suddenly to leap to fame, have had so brief a duration as hardly to acquire the notice of a biographer. But it was not in Rousseau's power to treat an attachment of this sort otherwise than seriously.[1] He did more than

[1] See the Venetian episodes of Zulietta and the little girl "protected" by himself and Carrio. The peculiarity in Rousseau's case is that he starts in life not only without moral principles of any sort, but with the perverted notions he owes to Madame de Warens, and to the vicious examples given him by the men and women amongst whom he lives. His experience of life then is the opposite of that generally made by the young, exposed to temptation without principles to protect them. He is not corrupted by experience of, and contact with evil, but this experience and contact help him to know corruption and evil to be odious, and he arrives at good principles by power of the moral sense. Nothing can be worse than his intention in the case of the Venetian child, but he is not

observe the terms of his engagement to Thérèse. He did marry her, at a time when they both were old, when any illusion that may have blinded him in the early days was over; when he knew the woman, to whom he gave a name he had made illustrious, to be vulgar, shrewish in temper, untrustworthy in money affairs, and addicted to drink, amongst other charming qualities; but when he could forget all this, to remember only that she had been his companion through long years of poverty, anxiety and exile; his kind nurse in sickness, and (as he fondly believed) the one being, in a false world, faithful and true to him. But, as a matter of fact, Rousseau married Thérèse from the first. He took her, in those days of the Hôtel Saint Quentin, "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, and until death parted them." And during the thirty-five years that this union lasted, he shared his good fortune with her, he protected her as far as possible from evil, he endured, without a murmur, her constant complainings, he screened her at his own expense from blame; he trusted her blindly, believing the whole world wrong, since so only could she possibly be proved right.

No doubt, gratitude for Thérèse's supposed fidelity, and for her real attention to him and care during his frequent illnesses, had much to do with Rousseau's inalterable affection for one with whom he had no thought, no taste, in common. But gratitude was not the only tie. He never saw this woman as she really was; dull, mindless, incapable of self-improvement. He saw her in contrast to the brilliant and fickle fine ladies who, since Madame de Warens betrayed him, had made such havoc of his heart, and of his time. He saw her, also, in contrast to himself. With her contented ignorance, her tranquil insensibility to the strife of spirits in the air, she was a refreshment to the world-weary, thought-

conscious of outraging any principle in forming this plan; it is instinctive feeling that makes the carrying out of this plan impossible, and compels him to respect innocence and youth.

weary man, so keenly and painfully conscious of division of mind in himself and all around him, so athirst for a life at one with itself, not torn asunder by the impulse towards new ideas and the lingering tenderness for old and cherished associations. Thérèse was at one with herself. In Rousseau's sight, she was an innocent and healthy being, placed by nature beyond reach of the disturbing ideas, and pernicious influences, that had poisoned for him, and others, the sources of contentment. The sophistries that had misled the clever Madame de Warens, the sentimental subtleties that were at once the delight and the ruin of the brilliant Madame d'Epinay, would be empty words in the hearing of Thérèse; nor would either the errors or the charms of the amiable scepticism of the day win any admiration from this dull and sluggish mind. The dulness and sluggishness were, for Rousseau, the highest form of wisdom—tranquil simplicity; and the great secret of the power she possessed over him was derived from his faith in her untouched candour, her unspoiled and unerring sincerity of soul.

Unfortunately, this faith was a delusion. Thérèse was no unspoiled child of nature. In reality, she was much more essentially the artificial product of corrupt social conditions, than either of the two cultivated women with whom Rousseau especially compared her. Madame de Warens and Madame d'Epinay were both kind-hearted, impulsive women, whose caprices were rather perversions of the head than of the heart. But Thérèse Levasseur's was a perverted nature, core through; her incapacity for mental growth, her taste and talent for low intrigues, her jealousy and suspiciousness, her lack of order and foresight, her inextinguishable physical appetites, that, at a time when she was nearly sixty years of age, led her into the same sort of scrapes that befell her before she had reached womanhood—all these characteristics belonged, not to a simple and unsophisticated being, but to an unhappy offspring of vicious

parents, reared amongst the most sordid aspects of town life. Thérèse's first lessons were the examples of a scheming mother, a feeble and bankrupt father, and older brothers and sisters, who first ill-treated, and then robbed her. The girl herself, neglected, untaught, had been allowed to fall the prey of a seducer in her childhood, and thus degraded and ruined morally and physically beforehand, she had been thrust into life, with her precocious knowledge of evil, her hopeless ignorance of all things beautiful and good, to take what fate might bring her, on the strength of her youth and some fresh good looks, in the capacity of needle-woman and general drudge to the disreputable hostess of a second-rate tavern. What fate did bring her was what might least have been expected—the serious and strong affection of a man like Jean Jacques Rousseau! No doubt Thérèse was incapable of appreciating the true worth of what she had won. The genius, the extraordinary sensibility, the elevation of soul, the touching simplicity of heart—to these gifts of the spirit incarnate in the man Jean Jacques, such a woman as Thérèse would be blind. But she had a sufficient sense of the social and intellectual disparity between herself and the much-sought-after author and musician, who was pestered and pursued by the admiration especially of ladies of fashion, to realize at once the advantages and the perils of this connection. It would depend upon herself to make it a durable union; and, in her own narrow and suspicious way, she came to the conclusion that the only plan for holding Jean Jacques securely, was to make him feel she was necessary to him, and to drive away all the fine friends who might draw his affection aside, or teach him to despise her.

This we find to have been the ruling motive of Thérèse's conduct during all the years she lived with Rousseau. It is true that, whilst Madame Levasseur was by her daughter's side to counsel and direct her,

we find the second and simpler aim of getting as much out of Rousseau as possible. But with Thérèse herself this was always a secondary object to the one that consisted in establishing her claim over the man who alone stood between her and a life of misery and scorn, whose bitterness she knew. When Madame Levasseur's influence was withdrawn, we find Thérèse quite ready to embroil Rousseau even with people who had it in their power and will to help his material fortunes, but whom Thérèse dreaded as rivals, or as enemies to herself, and her influence.

During the first four years of their *liaison* there was very little cause for jealous anxiety, and if during this period Thérèse had borne Rousseau any children, it is probable that nothing would ever have been heard of Mdlle. Gouin, or, in this connection, of the Enfants Trouvés. Rousseau's proud theories concerning the advantages of a general State education for all children, and especially in the case of a poor author, for the children who must otherwise be nourished at the cost of their father's dishonour, would never have stood against the obstinate and fierce resistance they would almost certainly have met with from Thérèse. Never was a man less capable of tearing infants from their mother's arms than the emotional and sensitive Jean Jacques, at once reduced in his proudest moods to helplessness by the spectacle of a woman's tears. And there is nothing to show that Thérèse, while she was incapable of the higher emotions, was deficient in those instincts that make even female animals fight and scratch in defence of their young. Thérèse might, and probably would, have neglected her children as they outgrew physical dependence on her care; but everything we know of her goes to show that she would have clung to them in their infancy with the same jealous physical attachment she displayed for Rousseau. Her feeling for him, at any rate during the years whilst their conjugal relations lasted, may not merit the name of love; but it was not

a wholly mercenary and selfish feeling. It has been said, she could forget material advantages if these came into conflict with her absorbing desire to hold the first place in Rousseau's affections. Again, she was willing to forego her own ease, and to nurse him devotedly through long and unromantic illnesses, requiring services that only affection could have made otherwise than humiliating, but which she never rebelled against, nor neglected. And whilst she was quite careless of what misery of mind she occasioned him, she showed herself honestly distressed and affected even to tears by the spectacle of his physical sufferings. All this should prove that Thérèse would not readily have consented to part with her children ; and besides, she had nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by abandoning them. Her interest was to compel Rousseau to recognize the tie between them as a binding one ; and nothing could have strengthened her claim upon him like the birth of children. But, at any rate during these first four years, no such event happened ; and Thérèse may by this time have come to the conclusion an eminent physician has put forward to-day :[1] the conclusion, namely, that Rousseau's ill-health made it impossible for him to become a father. But just when there was time for Thérèse to arrive at this conclusion, so destructive of the hopes that would have confirmed her claim to be regarded, and perhaps to be recognized, by Rousseau as his wife, came his dangerous visit to Chenonceau—amongst brilliant men of the world, and worse still, captivating ladies, all bent upon pleasure and disposed to make much of the man of genius who, by his gifts and his eccentricities, helped to enliven them. No doubt Jean Jacques, wishing to amuse his poor Thérèse,

[1] Dr. Roussel. See Grand Carteret's *Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourdhui*. Dr. Roussel maintains that medical science settles the question once for all by asserting that sufferers from the constitutional infirmities afflicting Jean Jacques Rousseau are necessarily childless.

left all alone in Paris, would write her long accounts of the gay doings at Chenonceau ; and of his own dramatic and musical successes. Thérèse, "no scholar," would have recourse to her mother to read her the letters : and the intriguing old woman would impress upon her daughter the importance of binding to her more securely the man on whom they both depended, and who might so easily be drawn aside from his attachment to an uneducated girl by the charms and flatteries of the fashionable and accomplished women of his present society.

"If only now you had children!" the mother would say ; and the daughter would echo the regret implied.

And upon Rousseau's return he learnt what he had before heard nothing about—that Thérèse expected in a short time to become a mother. We may choose to think that Madame Levasseur derived a profit from the arrangements she was directed to make with Mdlle. Gouin ; and as to the daughter, we have, at any rate, a perfectly intelligible theory of her motive for leading Rousseau to suppose that she was magnanimously sacrificing for his sake the joys of motherhood after undergoing all the pains. Thus these imaginary infants offered up by their mother with "groanings," but without resistance, might prove a more binding claim upon such a man as Rousseau than even the presence of real children would have been.

It might be urged that the successful carrying out of this scheme requires us to suppose the Levasseurs more clever, or Jean Jacques more stupid, than can easily be believed ? But the answer to this objection is that Thérèse, by virtue of her stupidity, or, as Rousseau described it, simplicity, was esteemed by him on all occasions, before the wise and prudent, worthy of belief. He had, too, a most dangerous confidence in the instinctive wisdom as well as truthfulness of this "child of nature." "This person so limited, and if you like so stupid," he says of Thérèse, "can prove an excellent counsellor on difficult occasions. *Often in Switzerland*,

in England, in France, amidst the catastrophes that befell me, she saw what I did not see myself; she gave me the best advice to follow; she drew me back from perils into which I should myself have plunged blindly."

A great deal more needs to be known about Thérèse's influence in Rousseau's life. But so far as the question of his children is concerned, our conclusion may be summed up in a few words. The only evidence for the existence of these children we have, to weigh against the many arguments that point to their never having existed at all, is the unsupported statement of a woman who can be shown to have constantly, upon other occasions, deceived Rousseau; and who had a distinct object for deceiving him here. He not the less remains, as has been said, morally responsible for the fault he was willing to commit, and believed had been committed. But before weighing the actual offence we should attempt to realize all the circumstances surrounding this man, all the motives ruling him, all the difficulties that seemed to make an opposite course of conduct impossible, all the plausible arguments that might so easily persuade him that in following the course most convenient to himself he was also considering the true interests of others. Rousseau's fault, and the amount of moral blame that remains with him, may be summed up in his own words—*he was to blame, since he allowed himself to run the risk of incurring obligations that he could not fulfil.* When this has been said, all is said. He did *not* behave with inhuman cruelty to Thérèse, trampling down her maternal instincts. He did *not* expose frail and tender infants to the risk of perishing from cold or hunger; nor was there anything practically barbarous in the fate he was willing to give his children, when he consented that they should be sent to the Enfants Trouvés. He did *not*, when he wrote the *Emile*, hypocritically denounce in others the very acts secretly practised by himself; on the contrary, he strove in this,

the noblest of his works, to atone, so far as he was able, for the sin in his past that caused him bitter remorse; and for which, as he says himself, "he never was consoled."

And the fault must be weighed against the atonement. If Rousseau had not been haunted by personal remorse, would his voice, in the *Emile*, have had the passionate power that made it find its way to the hearts of the cynical, pleasure-seeking men and women of his day, awakening in them, also, memories of remorseful tenderness, and new regrets for all the innocence and mirth and love banished, with the child, from their homes? But the magical sympathy and enthusiasm of compassion that thrilled this repentant self-accuser travelled further yet. Throughout Europe, Rousseau's voice went, proclaiming with even more resistless eloquence than it had proclaimed the *Rights of Man*, the *Rights of Childhood*. Harsh systems, founded on the old mediæval doctrine of innate depravity, were overthrown. Before Pestalozzi, before Froebel, the author of *Emile* laid the foundation of our new theory of education: and taught the civilized world remorse and shame for the needless suffering, and the quenched joy, that through long ages had darkened the dawn of childhood.[1]

[1] See Appendix, Note E.

PART IV

THE LEGEND OF ROUSSEAU'S SEVEN CRIMES

I. Two "Crimes" against Madame D'Epinay.

CHAPTER I

THE OFFER OF THE HERMITAGE

We have now to return to the Legend of Rousseau's Seven Crimes as set forth in Diderot's "tablettes"; and as handed down to posterity in Madame d'Epinay's *Memoirs*. Diderot, when stating that Rousseau had been guilty of seven crimes which alienated all his friends, did not classify under seven heads the very much larger number of charges he brought against the "unhappy Jean Jacques." Taking the "tablets" in hand, we must try to arrange in some order these confused accusations, so that their veracity may be tested: and the best plan will be to accept this division into seven leading charges, and to examine them as incidents of the Legend of Jean Jacques' sins against his "old friends."

Thus we have: *Two crimes against Madame d'Epinay.* 1. He accused her of wishing to sow division between Madame d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert, and for this purpose of having tried by base means to obtain Madame d'Houdetot's letters to Rousseau, and to use this information to awaken Saint-Lambert's jealousy. 2. He refused to accompany Madame d'Epinay to Geneva; and justified this selfish ingratitude by an abominable letter.

Two crimes against Diderot; and two against Saint-Lambert; all four entangled in the story of an "atrocious letter" to Saint-Lambert.

One crime against Grimm: that he accused Grimm behind his back of treachery, yet made him the umpire in his dispute with Madame d'Epinay.

Commencing our examination with Rousseau's

"crimes" against the "benefactress" who gave him the Hermitage, it will be noticed that Diderot does not stay to inquire whether Rousseau had good grounds for his suspicions against Madame d'Epinay; or sound reasons for neglecting to offer himself as her travelling companion, when her health compelled her to go to Geneva. The position taken up is that Jean Jacques was so indebted to Madame d'Epinay, that he had no right to complain, let her do what she would; nor to refuse her any service she claimed at his hands, let it cost him what it might.

Were these the actual relationships between Rousseau and Madame d'Epinay? Was she a thoughtful and an attentive friend, as the *Confessions* states the case, who had sought to please him by a graceful action? Or was she his benefactress, who "nourished him, his mistress, and the mother of his mistress," to take the affirmations of Diderot?

The story as it stands in the *Memoirs* of Madame d'Epinay is arranged to support the last view of the case: consequently, if it be a true story, it proves, among other things, that Rousseau has given us, what Saint-Marc Girardin (more polite than Sainte-Beuve) describes as a fairy tale, *un conte de fée*, in the *Confessions*.

Readers will recollect the pretty story told there of Madame d'Epinay's offer to Jean Jacques of the Hermitage.[1] One day, before his departure for Geneva, in 1754, Rousseau paid a visit to La Chevrette, Madame d'Epinay's country house near Montmorency; and walking with her on the borders of the forest, noticed a small cottage, which had actually been the residence of a hermit in earlier days, and still bore the name of the Hermitage. Struck by the picturesque solitude of the situation, Rousseau exclaimed: "What a delightful abode! Here, Madame, is the retreat I should choose!" At the time Madame d'Epinay did not appear to give any attention to the remark. But some twelve months

[1] *Confessions*, part ii., liv. viii.

later,[1] after his return from Geneva, when he again paid her a visit, the mistress of La Chevrette took him for the same walk: and to his surprise he found the ruined hut that was the Hermitage, had now been transformed into a well-arranged and pleasant little dwelling, quite suitable for three persons to inhabit. Madame d'Epinay had taken pleasure in carrying out these repairs, and had been the better able to do it because Monsieur d'Epinay was at the time employing a large number of workmen to enlarge the château of La Chevrette. Now, in a kind little speech, she offered this dwelling to Rousseau.

"My Bear, she said to me," writes Rousseau, "here is your place of refuge; you yourself chose it, and friendship offers it you. I hope it may take away from you the cruel notion of leaving me." "Never in my days," adds the author of the *Confessions*, "was I more deeply, more delightfully moved."

But notwithstanding his emotion, and his delight at Madame d'Epinay's thoughtful kindness, Rousseau did not at once renounce his intended return to Geneva. He hesitated for some time, and Madame d'Epinay used her best efforts to persuade him. Then the winter arrived and the walls of the newly-built cottage had to get dry. Rousseau's mind must have been made up some months earlier, but he entered the Hermitage on the 9th April, 1756; something less than two years after he had first fallen in love with the ruined hut on the borders of the forest, and had exclaimed, "Here is the retreat for me!"

Turning now to the story in the *Memoirs*, the reader will not forget that by Grimm's account in the *Correspondance Littéraire*, Rousseau "persecuted" Madame d'Epinay for a long time to lend him the small house on the borders of the wood; "a refuge entirely unsuitable to a man of his morbid, ill-balanced mind, where, as a matter of fact, he became mad, after a few months, and left it, at war with himself and all mankind."

In the *Memoirs*, René does not exactly "persecute"

[1] Summer, 1755.

Madame de Montbrillant to give him Les Roches; but he provokes the offer, by appealing to her in his perplexities. The Republic of Geneva has offered him, so the story goes, the well-paid post of Librarian in that city. But he does not want to go there; first of all, he distrusts his fellow citizens and then he does not want to leave her, and his "dear friends" Volx and Garnier. But he cannot endure Paris any longer; and he has no means of procuring himself a country residence in France. What is he to do?

The kind lady sets her wits to work. She recollects there is a little cottage on her estate at Montmorency, *which René has never seen.*[1] It will need repair, but this can be done without letting him know that it has cost her anything. She decides to offer him this abode; and at the same time to make up for him, by adding to the proceeds of the sale of his books, a fund enough to secure him a small income sufficient for himself and "Les Elois," *i. e.* the Levasseurs, described as his housekeepers.

But when making these proposals, the considerate Madame de Montbrillant urges René to weigh them against the advantages of the offer made him by the Republic of Geneva: and she concludes in this admirably judicious manner:—

"In short, my good friend, reflect, compare; and feel very sure that, in so far as I am concerned, my only wish is that you should choose the part that will render you most happy. Certainly, I feel the value of your friendship, and the pleasure of your society: but I believe that one should love one's friends for their own sakes first of all."

Reasonableness incarnate! But the tone is not one that belongs either to Madame d'Epinay's epistolary style, or to the attitude she was entitled to take up in her relations with Jean Jacques Rousseau. It indicates, however, the relationships that we are meant to assume

[1] See *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 229.

existed between the patroness, Madame de Montbrillant, and her poverty-stricken and irrational *protégé*, René. This displeasing personage, true to his character of taking everything and "asserting his independence by ingratitude," begins by an ungracious refusal: and ends by accepting Madame de Montbrillant's offer.

The kind lady is delighted, and confides her plans for René's benefit to his friend, and her own lover, Volx; who, to her surprise, severely disapproves of the arrangement. Volx upon this occasion displays extraordinary prophetic powers: he foretells that René will certainly go mad at Les Roches, because "no one is less suited than he for the solitude of woods." He will quarrel with all his friends, and accuse his benefactress, Madame de Montbrillant, of having persuaded him to renounce his country!

This is the story that Sainte-Beuve, E. Scherer, Saint-Marc Girardin, and Mr. John Morley all prefer to Rousseau's charming history of Madame d'Epinay's offer to him of the Hermitage.

The first fact, however, that is established by examination of the different manuscripts of the *Memoirs*, is that the account, as it now exists, of Madame de Montbrillant's offer to René of Les Roches, *is not Madame d'Epinay's original story*. But that we have to deal with one of the episodes that have been "re-written from the commencement."

The incident occurs in the 130th cahier of the Archives MS.: and it is plainly an interpolation; written upon pages that are pasted on to the margin of pages that have been cut out.

Amongst the Arsenal Notes, we have a series of instructions given, which indicate the plan that has been followed in this interpolated passage. It must again be insisted upon that both here and elsewhere throughout this inquiry, the notes indicating the "changes that are to be made in the fable," show what did *not* exist in the first version of the story. In other words,

we have some negative evidence, at any rate, of Madame d'Epinay's suppressed narrative. We know that it did *not* contain any of the statements made in the Notes.

Here (literally translated) are the Notes that will be found amongst the Arsenal cahiers :—

A. "*René is sad, the life of Paris wearies him, its injustice revolts him. The arrival of Tronchin. René introduces him.*"

B. "*René comes to confide the propositions of the Republic, what reply is made to him. A mystery is made of it to Volx—as about the letter written to him.*"

C. "*The history of René learnt by Costa. Volx knows nothing about the offer of Les Roches. When he hears about it—my friend, she replied, do not tell me that twice; for I have always had such bad luck when doing good, that the notion might perhaps come to me to do harm in order to see if it did not serve me better.*"

D. "*Describe the installation of René at Les Roches:—the old woman is carried—show what is meant in a letter to René by the exchange of mantles.*"

If the *Memoirs* are to be checked by historical events, the epoch reached is established by the phrase in Note A :—*l'arrivé de Costa, René le présente.* Costa is the pseudonym given the Doctor Tronchin; and the Genevese registers, consulted by Professor Ritter,[1] establish that this famous physician, who introduced inoculation for small-pox amongst the upper classes in France, left Geneva for Paris in the middle of February, 1756, invited there by the Duke of Orleans, who wished to have his children inoculated. Tronchin met Rousseau for the first time upon the occasion of this visit; and presented him to Madame d'Epinay.[2]

Volx in the *Memoirs* holds the same position in

[1] Nouvelles Recherches sur les *Confessions* et La Correspondance de J. J. Rousseau.

[2] See Appendix, Note F.

Madame de Montbrillant's circle that Grimm, in February, 1756, held in Madame d'Epinay's; that is to say, he is the newly-accepted lover, who signalizes his accession to favour by working to clear the path of all rivals. In the novel, *de Formeuse* (de Francueil), who notwithstanding his proved infidelity, Madame de Montbrillant desired to retain as a friend, Volx has insisted shall be forbidden the house. *Desbarres* (Duclos), whom the heroine had esteemed it wise to conciliate, has been transformed into an open and dangerous enemy,—remain now *Barsin* (Desmahis) and René, to be got rid of. Volx has already undermined Madame de Montbrillant's friendly feelings for Barsin by an irritating manner towards him, resented by the victim of it, who fails to recognize the extraordinary superiority in Volx which justifies his want of manners; and who is in the end provoked to break off his friendship.

(Quotation. Archives MS. Cahier. 130. Brunet MS. vol. vii. p. 360. Printed *Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 226–227.)

JOURNAL OF MADAME DE MONTBRILLANT.

"I pity Barsin, but I am much more affected by the melancholy that has taken possession of René. He is unhappy and does not himself appear to know why. *He is thoroughly dissatisfied. Paris wearies him,*[1] *his friends are more often in the way than agreeable to him; everything he sees, everything he hears, revolts him, and makes him take a hatred to mankind.* I advised him to travel. He replied that to do that, one needed health and money, and he had neither. 'No,' he said, 'what I need is either the country or my native city; but I cannot yet decide which it is to be. And then, perhaps, you don't know how it often is a sacrifice almost beyond human strength, to give up for ever even the things that at times displease one. The

[1] "René est triste. La vie de Paris l'ennuie."—Appendix, Arsenal Notes D d d.

best thing is to pay no attention to me: here would be the greatest favour in the world—but it is the very one my dear friends, or those who call themselves by this name, are least disposed to grant me.'

"'I understand,' I replied, 'that they cannot do this; and I won't promise you either that I can contrive to satisfy you in that way.'

" . . . René has just left me: his soul is perplexed. My own is in the same state of doubt about the reply I ought to make to the advice he asks for.[1] He has received letters strongly urging him to return for good to his native city. 'What decision should I take?' he asked me. 'I neither will, nor can remain in Paris, I am far too unhappy here. I should be quite willing to take the journey, and to pass some months in my Republic; but by the proposals made me, it is a question of fixing my abode there, and if I accept I shall be compelled to remain. I have some acquaintances there, but no intimate ties with any one. These persons, who hardly know me, write to me as to their own brother; I know this is the advantage of the republican spirit, but I distrust such suddenly warm friends; they must have some motive of their own. On the other hand, my heart is touched by the thought that my native city desires my return; but then again, how hard to leave Volx, Garnier, and you. Ah! my dear friend, how tormented I am!'

" 'Could you not,' I asked, 'without engaging yourself definitely, make a trial of some months' sojourn there?'

" 'No, the offer made me is of a character to be accepted, or refused, at once and finally. And even were I to go there for some months independently of this offer, what should I do here with my housekeepers, and about the rent of my rooms? I can't afford the double expense. And if I give up my rooms here and take the Elois, mother and daughter, to Geneva, what

[1] "René vient confier les propositions de la République ce qu'on lui répond."—Arsenal Note, Appendix D d d.

shall I do with them there? And where am I to go, in case I am not happy at Geneva?'

"'It is hardly possible, my friend, to decide such an important matter as this in two hours; give yourself the time to think it over; I will think it over, on my side, and then we will see.'

"They propose to him," continues Madame de Montbrillant, "*the chair of a professorship in philosophy;*[1] and under this pretext they offer him a salary of 1,700 florins. I don't know whether he sees through the arrangement, but he does not say so. It is clear, however, that this offer is a mere pretext for giving him an income. Saint-Urbain[2] has frequently told me that the honourable consideration belonging to these posts is the only advantage derived from them, the usual salary being a hundred crowns. They are in a general way bestowed on men who are well off, in order that interested motives may not attract competitors. Saint-Urbain says that these posts are filled by men who are distinguished, and really learned. So far no one could be more suitable than René; *but it is to be feared that he will make himself a professor of sophistry and misanthropy.*"

Here we have a confusion as the result of J. C. Brunet's endeavour to lend historical accuracy to Madame de Montbrillant's narrative. Turning to the printed *Memoirs* (vol. ii. p. 228) we find that instead of a professorship of philosophy, it is a *place of librarian* which Madame d'Epinay is made to affirm has been offered to Rousseau—"*On lui propose une place de bibliothécaire,*" etc., and as a librarian has no special opportunities for making himself "a professor of sophistry and misanthropy," this phrase (which indicates the poor

[1] *On lui propose une chaire de professeur en philosophie,* MS. *On lui propose une place de bibliothécaire,* printed Memoirs—alteration made by J. C. Brunet.—See Appendix, Note D.

[2] Pseudonym of de Gauffecourt.

opinion the benefactress has of the man she serves) is omitted. Another alteration, in a letter from the *protégé* to his protectress, gives the key to this alteration. "*Il s'en faut bien que mon affaire avec ma patrie soit faite,*" writes René, in the MS. "Il s'en faut bien que mon affaire *avec M. Tronchin* ne soit faite," alters the editor.

The editor had remembered that in the *Confessions* it is said that *some time after the Doctor Tronchin's return* to Geneva he wrote to Rousseau, offering him the title of Honorary Librarian of Geneva. Professor Ritter, an authority upon all questions connected with Rousseau's relations with his native city, explains that this purely complimentary title was conferred upon Genevese authors whose works were held to do honour to their country. But such an honour had neither duties nor emoluments attached to it.

We come now to Volx's comments upon Madame de Montbrillant's benevolent action; and here it will be noticed that, inasmuch as it has not been found necessary to insert in the note indicating the changes that have to be made, Volx's unamiable predictions that René will go mad and quarrel with every one, we may take it for granted that this speech *did* exist in the first story.[1]

(Quotation. Archives Cahier 130; Brunet MS., vol. vii. p. 6; printed *Memoirs*,[2] p. 240.)

MADAME DE MONTBRILLANT'S JOURNAL.

"René told me yesterday that he had decided to accept the habitation of Les Roches. He recommended me to keep the matter secret; and I should have done

[1] "Il faut que Volx ignore la proposition des Roches. Quand il l'apprend . . . mon ami—répondit elle—ne me dites pa cela deux fois, car je me suis toujours si mal trouvée de faire le bien qu'il me prendrait peut-être envie de faire le mal pour voir si je ne m'en trouverais pas mieux."—Arsenal Note, see Appendix D d.

[2] The editor of the printed *Memoirs* inserts in this place a letter of Rousseau's, which is made to agree with the one given in his correspondence. René's letter in the manuscript differs essentially from the authentic one.—See Appendix D.

this even had he not exacted it. But the joy his letter caused me made it impossible for me to make a mystery of it to M. Volx, who was present when I received it.

"I was very much surprised to find him disapproving of the service I am rendering René; and disapproving of it also in what appeared to me a very harsh manner. I wished to alter his opinion, and therefore showed him the letters that have passed between us.

"'I only see,' he said, 'on René's part, intolerable pride. You are rendering him a very bad service in giving him Les Roches as a habitation; *but you are rendering yourself an even worse one. Solitude will entirely blacken his imagination. He will see all his friends in a false light as unjust and ungrateful, and you first amongst them, if you ever venture to refuse to obey his orders.* He will accuse you of having implored him to live near you, and of having prevented him from accepting the offers made him by his country. I see already the germs of these accusations in the three letters you have shown me. They will not be true, but they will not be entirely false either, and that will suffice to provoke blame; and to give you the appearance of a fault, that will be no more true than other faults that you have been before now unjustly accused of.' '*Oh, my friend!*' *I replied,* '*do not tell me that twice, for it is true I have always had such bad luck when doing good, that the notion might perhaps come to me to do harm, in order to see if it did not serve me better.*' 'No,' he replied, 'this notion will never come to you; but whilst continuing to do the best you can for yourself and yours, give up mixing yourself up in the affairs of others. The public is too unjust towards you—I assure you that the very least that will come of this, will be that you will be laughed at; they will say that it is to get talked about that you have given René a house.' . . . 'Ah,' I replied, 'promise me that nothing worse will come of it than this false interpretation, and I shall easily make up my mind to bear it.'

"'So can I,' returned M. Volx; '*but if this interpretation comes after a rupture with René, there may be graver consequences than you think.*'

"'But this won't happen,' I said; 'my friendship requires no gratitude. It appears clear to me, that this man will be unhappy wherever he goes, because he is accustomed to be spoilt; but with me, he shall find constant indulgence. All of us will find it our duty and pleasure to render life easy to him.'

"'That is very fine,' persisted M. Volx; 'but one always has cause to repent if one yields to unreasonableness; this man is full of it: and the more you tolerate it in him, the worse it will become. However, the mischief is done: you can't now undo it—but try henceforth to act as prudently as possible. But how will he live? And what are you doing for him?'

"'That is a secret, my friend,' I replied. 'He won't cost me much, he shall be well off and he shall remain ignorant of what I do for him, he shall not suspect it even.'

* * * * *

"I have been trying to persuade René that his principles, which would be very estimable if he were free, become very blameworthy in his situation; *because he should not permit himself to expose to destitution two women who had saved him from it, and who have sacrificed everything for his sake*[1]—Madame de Montbrillant continues:—'This consideration,' I said to him, 'ought to induce you to accept the help

[1] (Inasmuch as Brunet knew it could not be asserted that the Levasseurs had rescued Rousseau from destitution, he suppressed this phrase), the printed *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 235.—See Appendix, Note D. The effort is to establish for Rousseau the same obligations towards Madame Levasseur and Thérèse that Diderot had towards *his* mother-in-law, Madame Champion, and her daughter, before his marriage. These poor women, lace-menders and seamstresses, nursed the clever but penniless young author, who fell sick in a garret above their own fifth storey, through a dangerous illness. Diderot then actually owed his life to them, and he paid his debt by being far more inconstant to his wife than Jean Jacques was to Thérèse.

friendship offers you; and should even change your repugnance into a consent, much more respectable both in your own eyes and in those of others, to fulfil a duty towards those you are responsible for.'

"I had little influence over his mind.

"'And thus I am a slave?' he replied, 'and I am to accept a subject position? No—no—that does not suit me—I ask no one to remain with me, I need no one. The Elois are entirely free, and I claim to be free also—I have told them so twenty times; I do not ask them to remain with me, nor to follow me.'

"This sophistry did not edify me, and I told him so. He did not reply, but by his manner of listening, I suspect that he does not care to be reminded of certain truths . . .'

"'Come now,' I said to him, 'you cannot for a moment believe that your friends have really the intention of wounding you?'

"'Intention or no, if they do it, what does it matter? But do not imagine, Madame, that I am only revolted on my own account. What have I not seen you endure, also, at the hands of people calling themselves your best friends?'

"'Well then do as I do, my friend. If they are false, spiteful, and unjust, I plant them there, I pity them,—and I wrap myself in my mantle. *Will you have half of it?*'[1]

"He laughed and said, 'I am not sure what I shall do, but if I take Les Roches, I must resolutely refuse the funds you wish to lend me.'"

STORY TOLD BY GUARDIAN OF MADAME DE MONTBRILLANT.[2]

"Madame de Montbrillant made it her pleasure to install René herself on the first day when all was ready for him. In the morning she sent a cart to René's door,

[1] Appendix, Note D d d.—"Voir dans une lettre a René ce que c'est que l'échange d'un manteau."

[2] Appendix, Note D d d.—"Faites l'installation de René; on porte la vieille."

to bring away what he wanted, and one of her servants accompanied it. M. Linant [1] rode over on horseback to arrange everything early in the morning. At ten o'clock, she drove in her carriage to fetch René and his two housekeepers. The Mother Eloi is a woman of seventy, stout, heavy and nearly helpless. The roads at the entrance of the wood were impracticable for a carriage. Madame de Montbrillant had not foreseen that this poor old woman would be so difficult to transport and that it would be impossible for her to go on foot. It was necessary then to get a chair nailed on to two stout sticks, and to carry her to Les Roches. This poor woman shed tears of joy and gratitude; but René, after the first moment of surprise and emotion, walked on in silence, with his head bent down, taking no notice of what was happening. We dined with him. Madame de Montbrillant was so exhausted [2] that after dinner she nearly fainted; she did all she could to hide it from René, who suspected it, but who would not show that he did so. We returned slowly, and on the road back I said to Madame de Montbrillant that I greatly feared it would not be long before she came to repent of her good-nature." [3]

It remains then, established by the comparison of the notes with the manuscript, that the leading features of this story as it stands to-day in the *Memoirs* were alterations suggested to Madame d'Epinay, and made by her in her first account of the offer to René of Les Roches. But can these leading features be accepted as historically accurate? Let us before deciding examine Rousseau's actual circumstances in 1756, and the known facts of his relationships with Madame d'Epinay.

To commence with: what reasons are there for sup-

[1] The tutor of Madame d'Epinay's son.

[2] It seems to be meant that Madame de Montbrillant had done porter's work and carried Madame Eloi!

[3] "Nous nous en revinrent doucement; et chemin faisant je dis à Madame de Montbrillant que je craignais fort qu'elle ne fut pas longtemps à se repentir de sa complaisance."

This phrase is omitted in the printed *Memoirs*.—See Note D.

posing, or rather is there any reason at all for supposing, that in 1756 Rousseau was offered the post either of Librarian, or of Professor of Philosophy at Geneva, with a salary of 1,200 florins; and that the Doctor Tronchin was charged to convey this offer to the author of the *Discourse upon Inequality?*

The first reflection that must occur to every one is that, if any such proposal had been made to Rousseau, it seems very strange he should not have recorded it in the *Confessions*. On the contrary, he expresses himself disappointed by the cold reception his *Discourse upon Inequality* had met with at Geneva; and he gives this as one of the principal reasons why in 1755 he began to waver in the decision he had arrived at when, full of delightful memories of the cordial welcome given him by his fellow-citizens in 1754, he had returned to Paris, resolved to wind up business matters there, and then to establish himself at Geneva.

In February, 1756, the epoch of Tronchin's visit to Paris, Rousseau had already made up his mind to accept the Hermitage; and was only waiting for the walls of the house to be dry; so that even if Tronchin had been delegated to propose to him the place of librarian, left vacant, as Professor Ritter has discovered, by the resignation of a venerable official of eighty-six (le Spectable Baulacre by name) on the 28th February, 1756, he could but have declined the offer. Professor Ritter, as a result of examining the registers of the Venerable Company of Pastors of Geneva, has established that whereas the resignation of the "Spectable Baulacre" was accepted on the 28th February, the election of the Pastor Pictet to take his place stands recorded on the 5th March.

"*When one observes*," writes Professor Ritter (who, like other readers of the printed *Memoirs*, is inevitably misled by the editor's substitution of the word 'librarian' for 'professor of philosophy'), *the haste at Geneva to nominate M. Pictet, when there can have been hardly*

time to receive the news of the unsuccessful negotiations Tronchin had just had with Rousseau, one cannot but ask one's self if his nomination would have pleased every one in his native city."

The real reply is found in the evident conclusion that Tronchin *had no such commission to execute;* and that the legend of this post with a salary tacked on to meet the poverty of the man it was intended to benefit, was an invention of the conspirators to serve their theory that Rousseau could not, and was not supposed to, earn his own bread as he professed to do, by his trade of a copyist; but that he was humoured by his private friends, and even by the public at large, in this imposture; and meanwhile, since it pleased him to refuse patronage, means were contrived to assist him secretly.[1]

But if even there had been a salaried post contrived for him at Geneva, would Rousseau, in 1756, have found himself in the perplexity attributed to René? In other words, anxious to leave Paris, and unwilling to go to Geneva, was he in such poor circumstances that he could not have afforded to rent for himself a little cottage at Montmorency, or elsewhere, in order to secure for himself the tranquillity and refreshment of a country life?

Examination into the facts of Jean Jacques Rousseau's position seven years after the publication of the famous *Discourse* crowned by the Academy of Dijon, and five years after the performance, at Fontainebleau first of all, and afterwards at the Opera, of the *Devin du Village,* proves the absurdity of imagining that one of the most celebrated and sought-after men of letters of his period was dependent on the charity of the wife of a recklessly extravagant farmer-general; and incurred serious material obligations to her because she gave him as a refuge, a small house on her husband's estate.

To commence with, Rousseau stood in need neither of charity nor of a refuge. He not only earned his bread by his trade, but he had money in reserve from his

[1] See Appendix, Note F.—*Tronchin and J. J. Rousseau.*

Salon de Madame de Warens
Aux Charmettes, près Chambéry. (From a photograph.)

[*To face page* 200.

little Opera, which, as he affirms in the *Confessions*, brought him more money than either the *Contrat Social* or *Emile*. Nor, at this time, did he need a refuge. The epoch of his persecutions had not commenced; and in France he had a crowd of distinguished and influential admirers who would have gladly offered him cottages, or even castles, on their estates; had it not been a matter of public knowledge that the author of the *First Discourse* regarded the offer of services as an affront.

In Madame d'Epinay's case, it was because the service she rendered him had a sentimental, and hardly any material, value, that it moved him to so much gratitude. It was not because the Hermitage was a valuable gift, nor because it solved the perplexities of his position for him, that Jean Jacques moistened with tears (as he says he did) the kind hand that offered it him. It was because the charming surprise of this little cottage where the ruined hut had been, showed him how attentive to his wish, and how affectionately devoted in her effort to please him, had been the friend who used this argument to prevent him from leaving her.

It was in this sense that Rousseau described Madame d'Epinay as his "benefactress." *In no other sense did the term apply.* For if her offer, and his acceptance, of the Hermitage, be weighed against each other by the scales used to decide the relative value of material benefits, there can be no doubt that the person who gained most by Rousseau's residence at the Hermitage was Madame d'Epinay.

But, in order to arrive at a true understanding of the actual relationship of these two friends, behind whom in 1756 lay nine years of unbroken sympathy and mutual serviceableness, it will be useful to trace back this friendship to Rousseau's first acquaintance with Madame d'Epinay in 1747.

At this date Madame d'Epinay, although only twenty-one years of age, was already an accomplished type of the highly intelligent, humane, self-controlled, but

morally corrupt woman of good society in the France of her epoch.

The wife of a dissipated and recklessly extravagant man of fashion, she had been, within a few months of her marriage, instructed by a husband, to whom she was then passionately attached, in her duties and rights as a charming woman, who wished to continue amiable in her husband's eyes, and in the world's. Her duties were to ignore her husband's infidelities: her rights were to claim indulgence for her own.

Madame d'Epinay did not at once adopt this code of duties and rights. But after the birth of her second child —having discovered just and sufficient reasons to claim a separation from her husband, she entered upon what, by her own persuasion, she intended should be a mere platonic flirtation with as typical and accomplished a man of the world, as she was a woman of this world— M. Dupin de Francueil, the step-son of the Madame Dupin to whom Jean Jacques was secretary. M. de Francueil, however, was a man of his epoch; and had no taste for platonic pleasures. Notwithstanding his solemn vows to respect Madame d'Epinay's scruples, when the opportunity presented itself to ignore them, he took that opportunity; and was not esteemed less by Madame d'Epinay because he was foresworn. Nor did Madame d'Epinay esteem herself less; nor, in view of her husband's dissipation, did society esteem her less, on account of the quasi-matrimonial alliance which then ensued between herself and de Francueil; and which did not stand in the way of friendly relationships between these two amiable lovers and the nominal husband of Madame d'Epinay.

"M. d'Epinay," wrote the author of the *Confessions*, "was a good musician; so was de Francueil; and so was Madame d'Epinay. The passion for this art was a bond of union between the three. M. de Francueil having introduced me, I often supped with him at Madame d'Epinay's house. She was amiable, clever, and had

several accomplishments—an excellent friendship in many ways to make. But she had a friend called Mlle. d'Ette, whose reputation was bad, and who lived with the Chevalier de Valori, whose reputation was not good. I believe that her intimacy with these people was injurious to Madame d'Epinay, to whom nature had given, with an ardent temperament, many excellent qualities to control, or at any rate to compensate for, some frailties. M. de Francueil communicated to her some of the friendly feelings he had for me, and confided to me his *liaison* with her; of which I should, consequently, have said nothing here, had not the relations between them been so well known as not to have continued hidden even from M. d'Epinay. M. de Francueil even told me in confidence some strange things about this lady, which she herself never confided to me; and which she had no notion I knew; for I never opened my lips to her upon this subject; nor shall I ever do so to any one. All these confidences on the part of these different people put me in a very embarrassing position; and especially with Madame de Francueil, who knew me too well to distrust me in any way, although I was on friendly terms with her rival. I consoled to the best of my power this poor lady, for whom her husband did not certainly feel the same love she gave him. I listened to these three separate persons, and kept their secrets with absolute fidelity, so that no one of them extracted from me the confidences of the other; and without concealing from either of these two women my attachment to her rival. Madame de Francueil, who wished to use me for many things, received my firm refusal to interfere; and Madame d'Epinay, who desired to entrust me with a letter to de Francueil, received not only the same reply, but also a declaration of the plainest sort, that if she wanted to drive me away from her house for ever she had only to make such a proposal to me a second time. Let me do Madame d'Epinay justice. Far from being displeased by this

proceeding, she spoke of it to de Francueil with praise; and received me afterwards just as well as before. Thus, in these difficult relationships between three persons, all of whom I had to consider, whose good-will was serviceable to me, and to whom I was attached, I contrived to keep their affection, esteem, and confidence, by behaving with mildness and toleration, but, at the same time, firm honesty. In spite of my stupidity and awkwardness, Madame d'Epinay wished me to share in the gaieties at La Chevrette, a château near to Saint Denis. There was a theatre belonging to it, where plays were often acted; they gave me a part to learn which I studied with unremitting diligence for six months and had to be prompted in from beginning to end when the representation came off!—After this experiment they did not give me a *rôle* again.[1] When making Madame d'Epinay's acquaintance, I made also that of her sister-in-law, Mademoiselle de Bellegarde, who soon afterwards became the Countess d'Houdetot. When I first met her she was on the eve of her marriage."

Here then were the terms of friendship established between Rousseau and Madame d'Epinay nine years before she lent him the Hermitage. They were terms of equal confidence and affection, cemented by the essential differences, rather than the resemblances, between them. Madame d'Epinay, it must be realized, had undergone the formative experiences which had decided her character and destiny, before she came under Rousseau's influence; and she remained throughout her life, a representative woman of the epoch before Rousseau, the Voltairean epoch.

In my *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, I selected Madame d'Epinay as the type of the woman of society, with the characteristic faults and

[1] "*Pure affectation de gaucherie!*" observes Saint-Marc Girardin, when commenting on this passage. "Madame d'Epinay relates things quite differently." The Arsenal Notes and altered MS. show that what is accepted as Madame d'Epinay's account is an alteration in her original narrative.—Appendix, Note D D, p. 379.

virtues of her age, whose philosophy of life (a method of "using one's reason for one's happiness—*une façon de tirer parti de sa raison pour son bonheur*," as the de Goncourts define it,) was formed by the educational systems, family customs, and social conventions prevalent in the France of Voltaire; and also by the spiritual influences in the air when the *Henriade* was the gospel of the times, and when the Abbé Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* was queen of hearts. "No one better than the writer of the *Memoirs*," I said, "can teach us the shortcomings and the merits of this philosophy. The reserve and premature wisdom of her girlhood once forgotten, Madame d'Epinay always poses before us as an expansive, emotional creature, driven like a feather before the winds of feeling. Nothing is less true of her than this. This frail, sensitive, sentimental being (by her own account of herself) knows how to pass in stern silence through disappointments, humiliations, reverses of fortune, and physical and mental sufferings that might well have broken the heart, or turned the head, of a strong-minded woman in any other epoch; and not only does she know how to live through these trials, and to keep their bitterness secret, but she can shine in the world's sight, and charm society with her almost girlish brilliancy, in the very hour when these tragical secrets are gnawing at her heart."

Even in 1747, even when she was only twenty-one years of age, and, in her first quasi-matrimonial alliance with de Francueil, unreproached by society, and in her own eyes "bound by a free and voluntary engagement more sacred than any other," there was a tragical secret gnawing at Madame d'Epinay's heart: *the secret confided by de Francueil to Rousseau, which he does not betray, but which Madame d'Epinay herself reveals in the Memoirs.*[1] She did not confide her secret to Rousseau, nor did she know he was acquainted with it. But under the strain laid upon her by her own trained

[1] See *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 165.

power of self-concealment, and by the trained power of inalterable courtesy that, in the case of so perfect a gentleman of good society as de Francueil, took the place of chivalry, she found refreshment and relief in the society of this unworldly man, who wore no mask, and could assume no disguises; and in whom she recognized powers of sympathy and trustworthiness not met with in the men and women amongst whom she lived. There was consolation in the friendship of such a man between herself and the lover, whose mask of courteous devotion she dared not penetrate, lest she should discover the disenchantment she justly suspected it concealed.

But it was not only the sympathy she found, and the confidence she felt, in Rousseau, that ripened this acquaintanceship into friendship. In her true character of a kind-hearted woman, she felt zealous to safeguard the interests of this impracticable and gifted man, a mountain-born soul, astray in the cities of the plain. And the fact that the genuineness of her interest was recognized by him, and that he on his side confided in her, and claimed her sympathy, ministered to her active pleasure in womanly helpfulness. It also—in the hours of depression when she fought against the recognition of her lover's probable disenchantment—ministered to her self-esteem that she had won this confidence which served to honour her in the world's eyes, and consequently in de Francueil's also.

It has to be recognized that even in 1747, Rousseau's position was an exceptional one. The unsuccessful musician who had become Madame Dupin's secretary, whom Grimm would have us believe underwent humiliations that embittered his temper,[1] was, on the contrary, eagerly sought after, flattered and caressed. His fame, hidden in the future, was unforeseen even by those who valued him most. Yet this man, born amongst the mountains, and whose mind and nature had something of the simple beauty and elevation of his native

[1] See page 134.

hills, brought a new sense of youth and hopefulness into this over-civilized and cynical world. In philosophical circles, he was greeted with pleasure, if with a certain veiled condescension, as an original of genius, whose sallies excited admiration and amusement. But, above all, amongst the women of society, mistresses of salons, and patronesses of talent, there was rivalry to show favour to this stranger in their gates. He excited sympathy in these humane hearts, because they saw him, untrained in their philosophy, exposed to the perils of their world. But what was more, in a society which dreaded nothing so much as *ennui*, he excited curiosity also. All manner of romantic stories were afloat concerning him: legends of his past adventures, of an old enchanting love-story, of his present stubborn independence and unworldliness; of his bold resolution to please himself in his own way, and not in the way custom and public opinion pronounced pleasant. And amongst the many more wealthy and highly-placed society ladies, who would have been glad to tame this barbarian of genius and win him as their familiar guest and favourite, it was Madame d'Epinay who succeeded.

The sincerity of her attachment to Rousseau, the disinterestedness of her zeal to serve him, are beyond question. But she was never his benefactress in the sense intended by Grimm and Diderot—that is to say, as the charitable protectress of an obscure man, "seeking in desperate straits how to avoid dying of hunger." Enough has been said to show how ready Madame d'Epinay would have been to aid a fellow-being in such straits. But she was not "benevolent" in her actions towards Rousseau, for the simple reason that there was never any room for it. Even in the days before he became famous, Madame d'Epinay received from him more than she gave;—in sympathy, in counsel, in the honour this friendship did her in her own eyes and in the eyes of others, the chief benefits came to her.

The benefits that Rousseau derived from this friend-

ship were not practical ones : throughout their relationships, kindnesses done him by Madame d'Epinay were of value to him rather as tokens of her affection, than as material services. But what he did owe to her were some of the most valuable of those impulses and influences that worked upon his nature—slowly but incessantly—during this season of preparation, when, his heart the while hot within him, but unable to utter the thing he would, he lived in this artificial society which concealed so much virtue under the stifling mask of elaborate and fantastic vices. Here was a man charged to betray its secret of discontent, because he had entered upon this false existence, burthened with the consciousness of an earlier, a simpler and a happier state.

No doubt amongst the feelings and meditations busy with him in the two years that went before the publication of his *First Discourse*, some of the most passionate and imperious in their need to be uttered had their origin in the spectacle that forced itself upon him of the perverted goodness, wasted heroism, and spoiled sentiments and emotions of such naturally humane and lovable and courageous types of womanhood as Madame d'Epinay. In this way—by stimulating his sense of the falseness and cruelty of a civilization which distorted excellent natures, and used the finest qualities to conceal and almost to adorn, the disfigurements of vice—the ill-treated wife of Monsieur d'Epinay, and the deceived mistress of the disenchanted de Francueil, unquestionably *did* influence the future author of the *First Discourse:* and more especially the future author of the *Nouvelle Héloïse.* No one who is attentive to the facts of his friendship with Madame d'Epinay, can doubt that Rousseau had the kind lady of La Chevrette in his mind when, by the mouth of Saint-Preux, he described these women of the world ; and maintained that, let them pride themselves on their worst qualities as much as they pleased, they were, by virtue of their excellent hearts, good women in their own despite. . . .

The description may usefully be quoted here, because it explains to us how much sympathy, as well as indignation, there was in the passion that transformed this dreamer into a revolutionary thinker, making war upon the manners of his time.

"One of the great drawbacks of a large town," Rousseau makes Saint-Preux write from Paris, to Julie at Clarens, "is that men become there different from themselves, because society imposes upon them a different way of being. Above all, is this true of Paris; and above all is it true of the women there: who derive from the opinions of others the rules of the only existence they care for. When meeting a lady in an assembly, instead of the Parisienne you believe you see, you really have before you an illustration of the reigning fashion. Her height, her size, her walk, her figure, her throat, her complexion, her expression, her gaze, her language, her manner, nothing of all this is hers: and if you saw her in her natural state you would not recognize her! Now this disguise is very seldom favourable to those who assume it; in a general way, one gains very little by what one attempts to substitute for nature. Nor can one entirely efface the natural; by one outlet or another it escapes, and it is in a certain skill in seizing it, that the art of observation consists. It is not difficult to exercise this art in the case of the women of this country; for as there is much more that is natural left in them than they believe, one has only to observe them with some constancy, and to separate them, in so far as one can, from the eternal representation which pleases them so much, to see them as they really are. Through this plan, the aversion which they at first inspired me with, was changed into esteem and friendship.

"I had the opportunity of observing this on the occasion of a country excursion, to which some society women had thoughtlessly invited us (myself and some other new arrivals), without first of all discovering if we suited them, or perhaps with the idea of laughing

at us. That is what did not fail to happen the first day. They overwhelmed us with witty shafts; which, as we left them without reply, fell to the ground; and soon their quiver was exhausted. Then they gave in, gracefully and unable to bring us to take their tone, suited their own to ours. I don't know how they enjoyed the change: but for my part I was enchanted. I saw with surprise that I could learn more in conversation with them than with the generality of men. Their wit so adorned their good sense, that I regretted they should ever use it to conceal it; and I deplored, when I was better able to judge these women, that so many amiable persons should be wanting in reason, simply because they chose to be frivolous. I saw also that, insensibly, their natural graciousness and charm effaced their affected airs; for without thinking about it, one is bound to make one's manner fit the matters one deals with, and it is impossible when talking sensibly to use coquettish grimaces.

"Another incident helped further to change my first opinion. Often, in the midst of our conversation, they came to whisper something to the mistress of the house. She left us, and shut herself up to do some writing, and was absent for some time. It was easy to attribute this disappearance to some tender correspondence of the heart: or what might pass for it. Another woman did lightly make the suggestion:—which was so badly received that I was led to reflect that if the absent lady were without lovers, at least she was not without friends. Nevertheless curiosity having made me inquire into the case, what was my surprise to hear that these supposed gay Pari ssuitors were the peasants of her parish, who came to implore the protection of their lady in their calamities: one overcharged with taxes; the other enrolled in the militia without consideration for his age, or the children dependent upon him; another, crushed by an unjust suit carried on against him by a powerful neighbour; another ruined by a hail-storm, and yet rigorously kept to the terms of his lease, etc. In short, all had

some grace to ask: and all were patiently listened to. None were repulsed, and the time it was supposed had been given to billets-doux, was really spent in writing letters in the service of these unlucky people.

"I cannot tell you how surprised I was to discover, not only the pleasure a woman so young, and so dissipated, took in these good actions, but also how quietly and unostentatiously she performed them. From this time, I have only looked upon her with respect; and all her faults are effaced in my eyes. So soon as my observations were turned in this direction, I discovered a thousand things to the advantage of these women, whom at first I thought insufferable. . . . A common remark, often made to discredit them, is that in this country the women do everything, and consequently that they do much harm. But what justifies them, is that they do wrong, urged to it by men, and that the good they do is prompted by their own hearts. Let us take it as we will, they pride themselves on their worst qualities, but they are good in their own despite, and here this goodness is before all things useful. In every country, business men are without compassion; and Paris as the business centre of the largest nation in Europe, is necessarily the place where men's hearts are hardest. It is then to the women of this world that the unfortunate address themselves; they are the refuge of the unhappy, and never do they turn a deaf ear to their complaints. They listen to them, console them, serve them. In the midst of their frivolous lives, they know how to keep a portion of their time, that might be given to pleasure, for the exercise of their natural kindness. And if some few amongst them trade infamously on the services they render, a thousand others make it their daily occupation to help the poor from their purses, and the oppressed by their credit. True, it may be said, their good actions are not always discreetly done; and that they are ready to serve the unfortunate people they know, at the expense of other unfortunate people whom they do not chance to have

seen. But, in such a large country as this, how can everything be known?—and how can any amount of kindness of heart take the place of public justice, where the effort is, not so much to do good to particular people, as to prevent wrong being done to any one? But independently of these considerations, it is certain that the intention of these women is to act kindly; that, as a matter of fact, they do a great deal of good and with fulness of heart; that it is they alone who preserve in Paris the sentiments of humanity, which still reign there; and that were it not for the women, one would see the men, in their insatiable avarice, devouring each other like a pack of wolves.

". . . To conclude, if Julie had never existed and my heart had been able to form another attachment than the one it was born for, I should never have chosen my wife in Paris, still less my mistress; but I should willingly have chosen a woman-friend there: and this treasure might perhaps have consoled me for what I missed to find."

Such a woman-friend, certainly, Rousseau, for many years, recognized in Madame d'Epinay. Grimm in his *Correspondance Littéraire*, and also in some interpolated passages in the *Memoirs*, puts forward the view that Jean Jacques was very much in love with Madame d'Epinay. But the author of the *Confessions* denies that this captivating lady, in the world's eyes, ever had any attractions for him *as a woman*—and we may believe him, because the reasons he gives are not of the sort people invent: and also because on other occasions the susceptible man quite frankly acknowledges, not only his great passions for Madame de Warens and Madame d'Houdetot, but minor passions, and sentimental inclinations, in cases where there were fewer excuses to be found than in the circumstance of his long and intimate friendship with Madame d'Epinay.

"Perhaps," wrote Rousseau himself, "*I cared for her too sincerely as a friend, to desire her for a mistress.*"

Portrait of Madame de Warens at Twenty-eight
(By Largillière.)

[*To face page* 212.

That he did care for her sincerely, and trust her, as a friend, is proved sufficiently by the fact that he was willing (under the influence of the emotion her graceful and tender act in preparing this little cottage as a surprise caused him) to break through the principle of refusing favours, and to accept the Hermitage from her.

But it has been said that if material advantages are to be weighed, the person who was really a gainer by Rousseau's residence at the Hermitage was Madame d'Epinay.

She gained, not only the society and conversation of a friend who was also a man of genius, and whose original ideas interested, if they did not influence, her, but also the prestige of hostess to the most celebrated author of the hour; who after his celebrity was necessarily more sought after, and less accessible to his admirers, than ever. Madame d'Epinay, at this time, coveted before all things a literary circle: and the presence of Rousseau at the Hermitage attracted to her country house of La Chevrette a number of men of letters, who were drawn there exclusively by admiration for, or curiosity about, her famous guest. Nor was this all. Madame d'Epinay gained not only a reflected literary reputation by her position of Rousseau's hostess, but the moral reputation of the "Citizen of Geneva" served, in an epoch when she needed it, to re-instate her in public favour.

In 1753 an event had taken place, the secret of which was well kept amongst her contemporaries; but of which readers of George Sand's *Histoire de ma Vie* do not need to be reminded. George Sand, as every one knows, was the grand-daughter of Madame d'Epinay's first lover, M. de Francueil; who late in life (at more than sixty years of age) married Aurora, Countess de Horn, then a young widow of thirty. George Sand, reviving her girlish recollections of these family ties, which bound her to the epoch of Rousseau, speaks of "*mon oncle par bâtardise*," for a long time Bishop of Salgues, and afterwards Archbishop of Arles. "He was born in 1753, and was *the issue of the ardent and much too*

freely divulged loves of my grandfather de Francueil and the celebrated Madame d'Epinay."

This fresh misadventure had completed the disenchantment of M. de Francueil; and notwithstanding his philosophy and good manners, he gave in 1754, such evident proofs of a desire to end the "free and voluntary engagement" between himself and Madame d'Epinay, that, true to her philosophic method of using her reason for her happiness (or to combat unhappiness) she had made the best of the circumstances. Unable —her formative training having been undergone in the epoch when Manon Lescaut was queen of hearts —to find compensation for what she lost in the sincere friendship which Rousseau gave her, she took the more ardent sentiment offered her by a personage whom Rousseau had presented to her in the first instance, viz. the ex-secretary of the Count de Friesen, M. Melchior Grimm, left, by the Count's death in March 1755, in a position where the devotion and influence of the wife of a farmer-general had advantages for him.

The view taken by the world of these proceedings had not been favourable, or even just to Madame d'Epinay. *She* was held responsible for the rupture of an alliance she would not have asked better than to remain faithful to; and for having replaced an amiable and a polished man of society by a man neither amiable nor polished,—when this exchange was determined, not by free choice, but by the philosophic recognition of the doctrine that when one cannot get what one loves, one must school one's self to love what one can get.

But in these conditions of public opinion towards Madame d'Epinay, the surprise caused by the news of Rousseau's establishment at the Hermitage brought about a re-action. It was felt that the Citizen of Geneva would not have given this signal proof of esteem and friendship to a woman without moral worth: and an indulgent society, which demanded of its members not

freedom from faults, but qualities which compensated for them, took Madame d'Epinay back into favour.

These then were the substantial advantages obtained by Rousseau's so-called benefactress. . . . What were the advantages obtained by him?

It is not allowable to describe as a "benefit" conferred upon him the permission to inhabit the Hermitage free of rent. The few pounds annually such an abode would have cost him would not have strained his resources; and as a matter of fact, since for thirteen out of the twenty months that he was Madame d'Epinay's guest he paid the wages of her gardener, and, the debt having been allowed to accumulate, refused later on to accept the repayment of it, he cannot be said to have inhabited this little cottage for nothing. But in April 1756, Rousseau was as well able as in December 1757, to keep a roof over his head without assistance. The far more roomy and better situated little house of Mont Louis he took at his own expense, when he left the Hermitage, and he spent three years and a half there, until he was expelled from France. Diderot's assertion that Madame d'Epinay supported Jean Jacques and the Levasseurs at the Hermitage can only be described as a gratuitous falsehood. On the contrary, as has been seen, when they parted, the lady owed him the wages of her gardener (a fact that does not indicate any meanness on her side, but only reveals her case as that of one of those rich people whose extravagance leaves them constantly without ready money—whilst Rousseau was one of the prudent poor people whose dread of an emergency leads them to keep always a small sum in reserve).

True it is made evident by a letter of Rousseau's (inserted out of place in the *Memoirs*) that in 1755, before it had been finally settled whether he was to return to Geneva or to take the Hermitage, Madame d'Epinay had wished to strengthen her own case by making some proposals to her "Bear" about a project

of hers for increasing his income. And that he had replied,—not as Saint-Marc Girardin affirms, "in the tone of a declamatory porter," "du ton d'un portier déclamateur,"—but with a good deal of stiffness; and the evident intention to make clear to Madame d'Epinay that the motives which led him to feel much pleasure in her preparation for him of the Hermitage did not signify any renunciation of his principles. A second letter, evidently a reply to an apologetic one from Madame d'Epinay, where she has expressed regret that he is angry, is written with the purpose of toning down the severity of the first one.

In the *Memoirs*, as has been seen, Rousseau's letters are used as the replies made in February 1756 to the offer of the Hermitage, in the brief interval of time when, it is alleged, he had to decide between accepting the proposal Tronchin brought him of a salaried post at Geneva, or the alternative proposal of his kind benefactress, that she should give him a cottage, and make up an income for him, if he preferred to stay in France. It has been proved that this situation never existed. That Rousseau's mind was made up long before Tronchin came to Paris; and that no evidence confirms the supposition that the Genevese Doctor was charged in 1756 with any such commission as the re-arranged story in the *Memoirs* supposes. Rousseau's letter was not an answer to Madame d'Epinay's offer of the Hermitage, inasmuch as that offer was not made by letter: but the opening sentence indicates that this proof of her attachment to him made his friendship for her an obstacle in the way of his quitting France "*more difficult to surmount than ever.*"

"My plans with regard to my country," writes Rousseau, "are far from being settled; and your friendship for me puts an obstacle in their way which now appears to me more difficult than ever to surmount. But you have consulted your heart rather than the state of your fortune, or my inclinations, in the arrange-

ment you propose to me. This proposition chills me to the soul. How badly you understand your own interests when you wish to make a valet of a friend :—and how badly you understand me if you think that considerations of this sort can affect my determination. I am not in any trouble about living or dying: but the doubt that does agitate me cruelly is the part I ought to take which will secure me, whilst I do live, the most perfect independence. After having done all I could for this independence, I have not been able to find it in Paris. I seek it more ardently than ever, and what has cruelly perplexed me during the last year is that I cannot make up my mind where I shall find it possible to establish it most securely. Although the probabilities are for my country, I confess I should find it sweeter to live near you. The violent perplexity I am in cannot endure much longer : in seven or eight days I shall have chosen my fate : but you may be very sure it will not be material interests that will decide me; because I have never yet feared that I should want for bread, and if the worst comes to the worst, I know how to go without it. You will understand I do not refuse to listen to what you wish to tell me, if you will remember that I am not for sale ; and that could this be, my sentiments now above any price that could be placed on them, would soon be found beneath even the value put upon them. As for what regards you personally, I feel certain that your heart recognizes the value of friendship :—but I have reason to believe that yours is more necessary to me than mine to you, *for you have compensations that I am without, and that I have renounced for ever.*"

Madame d'Epinay's letter which provoked this reply is not forthcoming—(it was probably one of those which mysteriously disappeared from the papers left with the Duchess of Luxembourg in 1762). We can very nearly reconstruct it by attending to the leading points in Rousseau's answer. Evidently, in order to strengthen

her arguments, for keeping him in France, she had said that she would like to suggest to him an arrangement that would not only secure him against any anxiety, but might serve his interests, without any infringement of his principles. And further, she must have urged that his friendship was necessary to her happiness. Rousseau's reply to the last article shows both affectionateness and a little soreness. Correctly translated it runs:—"it is all very well, Madame, but now you have got your new lover, Grimm, you don't want your old friend Jean Jacques."

From Rousseau's second letter, also, we can easily reconstruct Madame d'Epinay's:—she has clearly written to express grief that she has made him angry: she has protested against his notion that she could wish to make him a valet, or that the proposition which he has not even let her explain, had anything of this character—as for the "compensations" he alludes to, she has protested she does not know what he means—that nothing but friendship remains to her—and so forth.

"I hasten to write you two words," answers Rousseau, "because I cannot bear you to think I am angry; nor yet that you should misunderstand my expressions. I only used the term valet to describe the debasement that the abandonment of my principles would necessarily mean for my soul—I thought we understood each other better than we do: surely between people who think and feel as you and I do, it should not be necessary to explain such things as this! The sort of independence I mean is not independence of work: I am willing to earn my bread, and I take pleasure in doing it; but I do not wish to take upon myself other obligations if I can help it. I am quite willing to hear your proposals—but prepare yourself at once for my refusal of them—for either they are gratuitous or they involve conditions: and in neither case do I want them. I do not choose to engage my liberty either for my own maintenance or for the maintenance of any one—I wish to work, but

when it pleases me : and even to do nothing when that pleases me, without any one being the worse for it except my own stomach. I have nothing further to say about the 'compensations.' When other things change and pass, true friendship remains : and it is when others fail that this sentiment brings one comfort without bitterness or stint. Learn to understand my vocabulary better, dear friend, if you wish to read my feelings. My words must not be taken literally : it is my heart that talks with you : and perhaps some day you will know that it speaks more truthfully than others. Good-bye, till to-morrow."

There is nothing ungracious, nothing underbred, nothing of the tone of the *portier déclamateur* in these letters, if we take Rousseau's situation when he wrote them ; and recollect that, although he was not at this time fully aware of the persistent endeavour of his professing friends to represent his independence of patronage as imposture, he yet did feel gravely the necessity for impressing upon Madame d'Epinay especially—that in taking the Hermitage from her as a token of her friendship, he desired that his obligations should be strictly limited to the pleasure he warmly acknowledged was procured him, by the habitation of a retreat he had chosen, and which his friend had prepared for him.

But from Rousseau's point of view,—and if the relations of friendship be recognized as sacred and serious, his point of view was right,—Madame d'Epinay, by the obligations she conferred, herself incurred obligations. By virtue of the sweet affectionateness which threw down his defences, she stood pledged not to betray the confidence she had won. And when she did betray it, her fault in Rousseau's eyes was not merely the injury she did him, nor that she placed in his enemies' hands the power to misrepresent his confidence in her as a renunciation of his principles ; the great fault was that her treachery sinned against those sentiments of loyalty

and mutual trust which are the foundations of noble friendship.

But did Madame d'Epinay betray Rousseau ?—Was not he rather the offender against the code of noble friendship, in that he did not reject with indignation charges of base curiosity, and malicious slander, made against a tried friend, who during nine years had proved herself deserving of confidence ?

Here is a question that can only be answered when we have examined the events, both as they actually were, and as they inevitably appeared in Rousseau's eyes, which led him to believe in Madame d'Epinay's treachery.

CHAPTER II

AT THE HERMITAGE

Before the Quarrel—Rousseau's "bizarre Theories"—The Quarrel with Diderot—Rousseau's Code of Friendship.

DURING the first twelve months of his residence at the Hermitage, Rousseau's friendship for Madame d'Epinay remained unaltered. The breach with Grimm had widened; and there had been a quarrel with Diderot, patched up by a reconciliation; which Rousseau took seriously. No doubt, throughout these months, Grimm had been steadily working to weaken Madame d'Epinay's attachment to her "Bear, Jean Jacques;" but he, at any rate, had felt none of the effects of it. During the winter of 1756 the author of the *Confessions* notifies the constant and thoughtful kindness to him of his hostess:[1] he says also that these months were, on the whole, the happiest and most tranquil he had known since he quitted Savoy.

"For five or six months," he writes, "when the severe weather protected me against chance visitors, I enjoyed more than I had ever done before, or have done since, the independent calm and simple life that experience taught me to prize more highly than ever; my only real companions were my two housekeepers, my ideal companions were the two cousins.[2] It was then that I congratulated myself, daily, more and more, on the wise decision I had taken, notwithstanding the clamorous arguments of my friends, who were angry that I should be free of their tyranny. And when I

[1] *Confessions*, part ii., liv. ix.

[2] The heroines of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Julie and Claire.

heard about the criminal attempt of a fanatic,[1] and Delcyre and Madame d'Epinay described in their letters the trouble and agitation reigning in Paris, how I thanked Heaven to be out of sight of the horrors and crimes, which would have fed and embittered the unhealthy gloom that the spectacle of public disorder before had plunged me into; whereas here, seeing round my retreat only kind and innocent objects, my heart could abandon itself to amiable influences. I record with pleasure the experience of the last peaceful moments left me. The spring which followed this calm and happy winter, saw the opening germs of misfortunes, which I shall now have to describe; and which, enclosing me thenceforth, gave me no such other interval of tranquillity."

The *Memoirs*, of course, give an entirely different account. Here the false Hermit, for whom nothing is so unsuitable as a country life, feels the demoralizing effects of solitude; he is rendered "atrabilious, quarrelsome and suspicious." The first sufferers from his ill-humour and base suspicions are the personages who stand for Grimm and Diderot. But his hostess, also, has experience of his misanthropy and cynicism. Unchecked by the wholesome reproof and mockery of the Paris philosophers, these evil sentiments so master him that he repays the hospitality of his benefactress by planting "desolation in her soul, with his sophistries." We are now dealing with the "*changes made in the fable*" in obedience to the important note reproduced in facsimile at page 94. It will be remembered that after the general advice "Revise René from the beginning" come these special instructions:—

"*He must be made in their walks and conversations to defend some strange theories (des thèses bizarres).*

We have this very phrase in the 137th cahier of the Archives Manuscript, where René, when defending the "bizarre" doctrines which leave desolation in the soul

[1] Damien's attempted assassination of Louis XV.

of that tender mother, Madame de Montbrillant, acts up to the character of the "man born for sophistry" described by Diderot; who "does not seek to enlighten, but to bewilder, his hearers."

The 137th cahier is re-written; and the original cahier 142 still exists revealing the alterations that have been made.[1] In this older cahier, 142, the passage that in the printed *Memoirs* will be found in a letter given as one from Grimm to Madame d'Epinay (vol. iii. p. 4) is inserted as a side-note. In the new cahier 137, as in Brunet's MS., it follows the sentence: "by treating your friends with courtesy and confidence you will secure an agreeable and honest society; and thus obtain from friendship the sole advantage you should expect from it."

"The counsel that by the way I cannot refrain from giving you is to act with extreme prudence towards René:[2] for a long time his conduct towards you does not appear to me straightforward. He does not speak ill of you: but he allows others to do so in his presence, and is far from being your defender; this displeases me."

The lady's reply to this letter is in the 139th cahier of the MS. (also a new cahier) (printed *Memoirs*, vol. iii. pp. 29, 30–31).

Madame de Montbrillant writes—"What you have told me about René, has made me examine him more carefully. I cannot say whether it is an antipathy I have taken, or if I understand him better than I did, but I feel this man is not sincere. When he opens his mouth to utter something I know is false, a cold sensation I cannot describe comes over me; and if my life depended upon it, I could not find two words to say. I don't think I wrong him when saying that he feels more pleasure in defending strange theories (des thèses bizarres) than pain at the alarm thrown by these sophistries in the hearts of those who hear them so

[1] See Appendix, Note D D, double cahiers.

[2] Of course '*Rousseau*' in the printed *Memoirs*.

skilfully defended.[1] I myself experienced yesterday what I am saying: he left desolation in my soul. I was talking with him and Banval[2] about Balbi's[3] method with my son; we found some things that we approved of, and some that we blamed. Suddenly I was moved to exclaim: 'What a difficult thing it is to educate a child!' 'You are right, Madame,' replied René; 'and the reason is that fathers and mothers are not made educators by nature, nor are children made to be educated.' This speech from him petrified me."

(Madame de Montbrillant is thrown into greater consternation when René goes on to propound his theory of education—or rather the "*thèse bizarre*" that no education is preferable: because in the savage state, education is not needed, man being trained by his natural needs and desires; and in the corrupt civilized state, it is mischievous, because since only the unscrupulous, false and selfish attain success, to bring a child up to be honest, truthful and humane, is to prepare him for unhappiness, and ruin. The sophist continues:)

"'By the present education, youth is spent in learning what has to be unlearnt later on. The supreme art in this education is to teach in what circumstances it is good to quote moral maxims; and when it is useful to forget them.'

"'But,' I said, 'do you really believe that there is no advantage in being good, even in a corrupt state of society?'

"'The advantage, Madame,' he replied, 'is one that will only be felt when this life is over.'

[1] "*Je ne sais trop si je lui ferais tort de dire qu'il est plus flatté du plaisir de soutenir des thèses bizarres que peiné de l'alarme que peuvent jeter dans le coeur de ceux qui l'écoutent des sophismes si adroitement défendus.*" The sentence is a very awkward one; as a general rule, Madame d'Epinay, who writes delightfully, takes very little trouble to make the phrases given her fit in with her own style: she puts the 'changes' in, word for word as the notes suggest them. 'Tant pis' one seems to hear her say to Grimm, 'have it any way you like.'

[2] Margency. [3] Linant.

"'Oh sir!' I exclaimed, thoroughly angry, 'you forget that I am a mother; and that you drive me to despair with your philosophy.'

"'Madame,' he replied, with perfect composure, 'you asked me for the truth; your distress shows that I have told it you.'"

Saint-Marc Girardin refers to this letter, reproduced in the printed *Memoirs*, and finds in it a proof that Madame d'Epinay, even before her first quarrel with Rousseau, had lost her old admiration for him.

"*It is curious*," writes Saint-Marc Girardin, "*to trace in the Memoirs the progress of this disenchantment.*"

What is really curious is to notice how critics who take the *Memoirs* seriously, lose sight of all facts which prove the statements given there inaccurate.

In this particular case, it should not, as a matter of fact, be necessary to prove from the manuscripts that this account of René's want of seriousness when treating his friend's anxiety about the education of her son, is a pure fable, invented to discredit the author of *Emile*. It is open to every reader of Rousseau's correspondence to obtain the certitude that Rousseau did *not* treat in this way Madame d'Epinay's appeal to him for help about these questions. We have a letter of earnest and sound advice dated from the Hermitage, and written by Jean Jacques to Madame d'Epinay early in 1757. Madame d'Epinay had submitted to her friend a letter she had prepared for her little son, nine years old, who had shown great pleasure at receiving letters. His mother had conceived the plan of writing him letters of good advice. Rousseau approves of the idea, but says the object of the letter is too apparent.

"I have read, madame, with great attention your letters to your son," he wrote; "they are good, excellent; but entirely unsuited to him. Allow me to tell you this with all the sincerity I owe you. In

spite of the tenderness and earnestness with which you adorn your counsel, the general tone of these letters is too serious. They show your purpose is to improve him—and if this purpose is to succeed, the child must not suspect it. I think the idea of writing to him a very happy one, that may help to form his heart and mind; but two conditions are necessary for this: he should understand you; and he should be able to reply to you. These letters should be written for him alone—and those you have sent me would do for almost anyone but him! Believe me, keep them until he is older. Tell him stories and fables, that he can himself find out the moral of, and, above all, that he can apply to himself. Avoid generalities: *one only arrives at poor results, or at none at all, by putting maxims in the place of facts.*[1] It is from what he has actually seen whether of right or of wrong, that you must start: when his ideas begin to form themselves, and when you have taught him to reflect, and to compare them, by degrees, you will change the tone of your letters, suiting it to his progress, and to the faculties of his mind. But if you tell your son now that your object is to form his heart and mind, and that you wish, whilst amusing him to teach him the truth and his duties, he will be on his guard against everything you say: he will see a lesson in every word you utter, everything, even his top, will become an object of suspicion to him! Try to instruct him whilst amusing him; but keep the secret to yourself.

"Your second letter is also full of ideas and images, too difficult not only for a child of nine but for one much older. Thus your definition of politeness is correct and delicate; but one has to think twice before recognizing its subtlety. Does a child know what esteem and benevolence mean? Is he able to distinguish between the 'voluntary' and the involuntary expression of a good heart? How will you make him understand

[1] "La veritable éducation consiste moins en préceptes qu'en exercises."—*Emile*, Book I.

that the body must not pursue the shadow; and that the shadow does not exist without the body that produces it?[1] Bear in mind, madame, that by presenting too soon to mere children profound or complicated ideas, they need words defined for them: that, as a rule, these definitions are even more complicated or more vague than the thought itself: children misapply all this; and they remain with thoroughly false ideas in their heads. From this follows another bad result: it is that they repeat like parrots words to which they attach no sense; and that at twenty they remain children; or become self-sufficient prigs. You asked for my reply in writing. Here, madame, you have it. I hope it may not vex you; for it is not possible for me to give you another. If I am not deceived in you, you will forgive my brutality; and you will begin your task over again with more courage, and more success than ever."

Rousseau having been exonerated from the charge of leaving desolation in Madame d'Epinay's heart by sophistries about education, especially blameworthy in the future author of *Emile*, we may now exonerate Madame d'Epinay from the sins against tact and kindliness attributed to her, as the authoress of the letters that are given in the *Memoirs*, for her replies to her friend Jean Jacques, when he, in his turn, sought her sympathy and counsel.

The occasion was in January 1757. After receiving an offensive letter from Diderot, Rousseau, too wounded and indignant to trust himself to reply to the man he still loved and believed in as a friend, poured out his griefs to Madame d'Epinay; throwing himself on her judgment for advice and consolation. No greater proof of confidence in her friendship could he have given; and we find that, in reality, Madame d'Epinay responded

[1] Madame d'Epinay had written: "la politesse est dans un cœur sensible une expression douce vraie et volontaire du sentiment de l'estime et de la bienveillance." She had also written: "la louange suit la vertu comme l'ombre le corps: mais le corps ne doit point courir après l'ombre."

generously to the appeal; acting as a true friend should have done, had the case been the one she was justified in believing it to be:—viz., the case of two men really attached to each other, the one dictatorial, using a domineering tone to compel his friend to follow his advice; the other independent and sensitive, offended at being abused for acting as he thought rightly. Had this been the true position, Madame d'Epinay, knowing well Rousseau's sincere attachment to Diderot, would have been a wise and prudent counsellor, in that she tried to persuade Jean Jacques to see only zeal of friendship under Diderot's displeasing style. Rousseau's letter is given correctly in the *Memoirs*.

"My dear Friend,—I should suffocate could I not pour out my grief in the bosom of friendship. Diderot has written me a letter that stabs me to the heart. He gives me to understand that it is through indulgence he does not esteem me a scoundrel; and 'that much might be said in that direction.' These are his very words: and all this, do you know why? Because Madame Levasseur is with me! Good God! what worse could they say if she were not? I sheltered them, herself and her husband, when they were left out to starve in the streets at an age when they could not earn their livelihood—she had only served me for three months—and for ten years I have taken the bread out of my own mouth to give it to her. I bring her here with me into good air, where she is in want of nothing. For her sake, I give up returning to my own country; she is absolutely her own mistress and gives me no account of her comings in and goings out. I take as much care of her as though she were my own mother. All that counts for nothing; and I am a scoundrel if I do not sacrifice my own happiness and life, and if I do not consent to die of despair myself in Paris, that she may have amusements! Alas, the poor woman herself has no such wish! she does not complain—she is perfectly

contented. But I see what it really is. *M. Grimm will not be satisfied until he has taken away from me all the friends I gave him.* Philosophers of the town! if these are your virtues, you leave me satisfied to be judged by you wicked. I was happy in my retreat—solitude is no hardship to me—poverty does not frighten me; the world's neglect is indifferent to me; I can endure my sufferings with patience: but to love one's friends sincerely and to meet with ungrateful hearts in return, all this is, I feel, insupportable. Forgive me, my dear friend! My heart is overcharged with grief; and my eyes burn with tears I cannot shed. If I could only see you and weep, how consoled I should be. But I will not set foot in Paris again: this time, at least, I swear it. I forgot to tell you that the Philosopher even indulges in pleasantry, he is barbarous with lightness of heart: one sees how civilized he has grown."

Here is Madame d'Epinay's real answer to this letter, printed from the original autograph (preserved at the Neuchatel Library) by M. Streckeisen-Moultou.

"Your letter, my dear friend, penetrates me with grief. I should have started this morning to come to you had not my mother been ill in bed. I confess to you, my dear friend, that unless Diderot articulates distinctly what you say he gives you to understand, I shall always think you have understood him wrongly, for it seems to me inconceivable! On the other hand, I heard yesterday at the Baron's that he was going to see you on Saturday: I can make nothing of it. Oh, my dear and good friend! why am I not with you? You are in trouble, and I am of no use to you! Your letter made us weep: may mine do the same for you. But what can I say to you? I know nothing except that you and Diderot love each other tenderly, and that some words misunderstood, afflict you. Take care, take care, my dear friend, not to let the seeds of bitterness take

root; perhaps you began by being in the right, take care not to finish by being in the wrong; which would happen if you closed your heart against the explanation which, apparently, your friend is going to ask for on Saturday—for a word of pity for the good old woman may have escaped him, without his attaching to his speech the meaning you see in it. In short, it seems to me that thirty complete proofs are wanted before one should venture to suspect a friend of intending to insult one. Keep me the letter and your reply, if all is not finished by Saturday. I shall come as soon as possible, meanwhile my heart is very near you.

"I am not answering what you say about Grimm. I shall try to forget as soon as I can that it is you who suspect him of an infamous action of which only a wretch could be capable.

"Good-day to you a thousand times, my dear good friend. For God's sake, calm yourself; you are not cool enough to judge correctly: you must try to be so in this case, both as a friend and as a philosopher. I embrace you tenderly and with my whole soul."

Here now is the letter given in the *Memoirs* as the heroine's reply to René's letter, Cahier 132. Archives; Brunet's MS., vol. vii.; printed *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 273.

"If the complaints you make against M. Garnier, my friend, have not more foundation than your suspicions against M. Volx, I pity you: for you will have much grave cause for self-reproach. You must either be more just to the last person, or you must cease to expect me to listen to your grievances against a man who merits much more than your esteem, and who possesses mine. If I were not kept here by a bad cold I would certainly go to see you, and to give you all the consolation that, with reason, you can expect from my friendship. I cannot believe that M. Garnier has directly told you that he thinks you a scoundrel, there is certainly some

misunderstanding here. My friend, be on your guard against the fermentation a word may cause, heard in solitude, and received in a bad disposition of mind. Believe me, fear to be unjust; of what importance is the expression used, when the intention is dear to one's heart? Can a friend really offend one? Has he not always one's interest, one's happiness, one's good name, in view? Perhaps even you have provoked by some irritability a reply which only has the meaning you give it when it is isolated from the context? What do I know? Not having seen your letters, or M. Garnier's, I cannot decide or reason with any assurance. All I know is that M. Garnier has the most sincere friendship for you; you yourself have told me so a hundred times. I am grieved not to be able to come to you. I should soften you less by my presence than by the relief you would find, necessarily, in confiding your troubles to one who feels them as keenly as yourself. If my letter could make your tears flow (!) and procure you some tranquillity, I am persuaded you would see things in a different light. Good-day. Send me your letters, and see always at the heading of Garnier's this important phrase '*par l'amitié;*' here is the secret key to the true worth of his supposed injuries."

Had Rousseau really received such a letter as this, his confidence in the friendship towards him of the writer would certainly not have continued. And yet this is one of the letters that Sainte-Beuve accepts as throwing light upon the questions at issue!

We have two other letters to compare, the one written by Madame d'Epinay, and the other *not* written by her, but found in her *Memoirs*. Rousseau sends his friend, Diderot's letters, and a copy of the reply he wishes her to forward to Diderot after she has read it. Madame d'Epinay's answer discloses that she is still acting upon the theory that the friendly part towards Rousseau is to persuade him that he has misunderstood

Diderot's expressions; and is angry without due cause. She tells him that she is not going to send his reply to Diderot; and she begs him to suppress it.

Was Madame d'Epinay acting honestly, in what she believed to be Rousseau's interest's? I have said that *my own conviction* is that, up to this date, she was perfectly honest. But this inquiry leaves the question unsolved, because our conclusions must be based, not upon convictions, but upon evidence. And we have no evidence to prove whether the lady believed herself to be serving her friend Jean Jacques, or whether she was already acting under Grimm's direction and control, when endeavouring to foster Rousseau's belief that Diderot (who was already his secretly active enemy and calumniator) was an injudiciously zealous friend.

"I am now in a better position to judge than I was this morning," wrote Madame d'Epinay. "In truth, my dear good friend, I have read and re-read M. Diderot's first letter, and I cannot find one word in it to justify the state you are in. I see this first letter, full of friendship—of the wish to see you; he makes an observation which is in no way offensive, which has no weight if one takes it simply, but that at the very worst might be interpreted as the sort of reflection that is allowable between friends, on the drawbacks which out-weigh the advantages of a decision taken, or that one is about to take. He has the delicacy to reproach himself, and to ask you at the end to forgive him. And from this you start off with the belief that he looks upon you as a scoundrel; and to behave to him as though he had actually treated you like one! I cannot hide from you that you are in the wrong: I profess to love you with all my heart—and it is because of this that I do not hesitate to tell you my opinion frankly. Yes, my dear friend, you *are* in the wrong. Heavens! why have I not wings that I might fly to you, and fly back to my mother? I believe I could

bring you comfort in this trouble. As for M. Diderot's second letter, that can only be judged in reference to the one you sent him by way of answer to the first. I refuse to send him the last you send, he shall not have it: and I call upon you not to send it. I take upon myself to send him a message by my son, who is going there to-morrow, telling him that you beg him not to go to the Hermitage on Saturday, on account of the bad weather. Not that, my dear friend, I do not regard it as very essential that you should soon see each other; but, because, actually, there are causes enough to make him seriously ill, should he undertake such a journey on foot, in the frightful weather we are having. Write to him a letter dictated by your own heart, and I am sure it will speak for him, as mine speaks for you. Confess that you misunderstood his letter. If even he had been in the wrong he would feel himself all the more to blame—and as he was not, he will love you all the better. Put off until better weather your meeting, and meanwhile prepare it by opening your heart to the consolation of recovering your belief that his is responsive to your friendship. You are worthy, both of you, to love each other—ought a mere phantom to divide you? No, my dear friend, the cloud-storm has passed on one side, open your eyes, and you will see that in reality the sky has kept calm above you; the passing cloud has darkened the air as it sailed by, why should it leave any trace behind it? It will be a great consolation if you let me know you are tranquil, until M. Diderot can himself assure you that I am right; and that he said nothing calculated or meant to offend you. My friend, won't you listen to me, until you are calm enough to listen to yourself? Oh, my good and dear friend, sometimes you have listened to me ere this, did you repent having done it? Believe that I only guess at your own feeling, and that what I tell you to-day, you will yourself say two days hence. As for Madame Levasseur, the affair as it concerns her is simple enough.

Does she wish to remain with you or no? If she wishes to, all is said. If she does not, I will undertake the charge of her. Let her come to-morrow and I will arrange to meet her, if she likes; and if she wishes to spend the spring and summer in the country, I will take her back to Paris in the autumn. I will not speak only of your friends, *but no one who knows you can possibly believe that you keep her forcibly and against her will at the Hermitage.* In any case, let her say clearly what she does want, and let me know her decision two days in advance—that is all that is necessary. Good-bye, my dear and unhappy friend, how much I love you and how sorry I am for you! If you would come and spend twenty-four hours with me, and see no one but me, I would send you my carriage on Monday morning to Montmorency and it should take you back on Tuesday. My own position is this: my mother's state will not allow me to leave her for another eight days at least."

And now here is the letter in the *Memoirs* which Madame d'Epinay did not write; but which expresses the tone of the superior school-mistress, as well as benefactress, which Madame de Montbrillant assumed to a man living at her expense; and who was giving her cause to regret the charity she had bestowed upon an unworthy object.

[1] "And you pretend," writes the heroine of the novel to René, "that my letter has done you good? The one you have written me is more unjust, more full of animosity than the first! My friend, you are not in a state to judge! *Your head is in a ferment, solitude is fatal to you; and I begin to repent having given you the chance to shut yourself up thus.* You believe that you have cause to complain of M. Garnier to-day;

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 289.

although he has done nothing but push too far the warmth of expression he uses always; and which has no other object than to bring you back to your friends. He has exhausted for this object in vain all the arguments relating to your own health, safety and welfare: then he tried a chord which in all other periods was made to touch you; the peace of mind of a woman of seventy-five, who has had the goodness[1] to isolate herself to follow you. He perhaps believed that she secretly groaned at the thought of passing the winter out of reach of help; that was only natural; and you make it a crime in him! My friend, you afflict me, your state penetrates me with grief—for if you had said in cold blood all that you say in your three letters — but no! You are ill, you certainly must be! And then—what is there to assure me that some fine day the same thing will not happen to me as to M. Garnier? One owes the truth to one's friends—so much the worse for the one who cannot bear to hear it. You are not of those who should misunderstand its language, and you do not deserve, in your natural state, friends who can wound you. Go back quickly to that state, and prepare yourself to open your arms to your friend, who will not be long before throwing himself into them, by what I hear."

The comparison of the style of these letters with Madame d'Epinay's real letters, charmingly as well as amiably expressed, ought, one would have thought, to have told literary critics that they were dealing with forgeries. The same observation applies to all the interpolated passages—they have the stamp on them of the editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire.*

[1] *Qui a eu la condescendance.* Where was the "condescension" on the part of Madame Levasseur? Rousseau supported her as well as Thérèse; at the same time, it is clear that her presence in the household protected her daughter's good name: and here probably was one reason for removing her.

We are dealing here only with Madame d'Epinay's part in an episode that will be fully examined when the time comes to consider whether Rousseau committed the *scélératesses* against Diderot attributed to him. But, by way of establishing Rousseau's unaltered friendship for her, and upon what basis he founded his theory of the mutual duties of friendship, it will be useful to give the long letter that is the last confidential communication between himself and Madame d'Epinay. We are at the end of February or in the first days of March 1757. And in May, Madame d'Houdetot will arrive upon the scene: and their relationships be disturbed.

FROM ROUSSEAU TO MADAME D'EPINAY:—

"Diderot has written me a third letter returning my papers. Although you tell me in yours that you send me the packet,[1] it has reached me by another means, so that when I received it my answer to Diderot was already written. You must be as weary of this long, tiresome business as I am. So I implore you, let us speak no more of it.

"But how can you suppose that I should complain of you, because you scold me? Why, truly, you do well; when I am in the wrong, I often need it; and even now, when I am in the right, I am grateful to you, because I see your motives; and all that you say, because it is frank and sincere, has the stamp of esteem and of friendship. But *you* would never give me to understand that it is by indulgence that you speak well of me; *you* would never say 'and a good deal remains that might be said.' If you did, you would offend me deeply; but you would commit an outrage against yourself too, for honourable people should not have for friends those they think ill of. What, madame, you

[1] The MS. of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. This phrase is omitted in the MSS., but is re-inserted by the editor of the printed *Memoirs*, who probably had the original letter. See Appendix, Note D.

call this merely a fault in form? Let me make to you my declaration of what I claim from friendship, and what I exact from my friends. Find fault freely with what you object to in my rules; but do not expect to make me easily depart from them, because they are derived from my character; and that I cannot change. First, I wish that my friends should be my friends, and not my masters: that they advise me, if they like; but that they do not wish to govern me. I am ready to give them my heart, but not my liberty. They may say anything to me, but not treat me with contempt, contempt shown me by a person to whom I am indifferent is a matter of indifference to me—but if I endured it from a friend, I should deserve it. If they have the misfortune to despise me, do not let them tell me so—of what use is that? Let them renounce me: this duty they owe themselves. But apart from this tone of contempt, let them use the tone they please, and urge what they like—that is their right; but when, having listened to them, I follow my own judgment, I exercise my own right; and when I have once decided on what I wish to do, I find incessant remonstrances or reproaches useless and out of place. Then the great zeal shown in rendering me services I do not want annoys me, and gives a certain air of patronage to their friendship which displeases me. Any one can help a fellow man. I would rather they loved me, and let me love them; that is what only friends can do. Their caresses alone could make me endure their benefits; and also if they do persuade me to receive them, I would like them to consult my taste and not their own, for we think so differently, that what to them might seem agreeable, to me might be displeasing. If a quarrel happen, I am willing to admit that whoever is in the wrong should give in; but, after all, that decides nothing, for every one thinks himself in the right. Wrong or right, it is the one who begins the quarrel who should end it. If I receive his blame badly, if I am angry without cause,

he should not imitate my fault and get angry, or if he do, he does not love me. On the contrary, I would have him caress me tenderly, kiss me affectionately—do you hear, madame? In a word, let him commence by appeasing my anger—and assuredly it will not take him long. For no anger ever flamed in me that a tear would not extinguish. Then, when I am soothed and made tender and contrite, let him scold me as he please, and show me where I was wrong, and certainly he will not find me obdurate. That is what I would wish my friend to do for me: and what I am always willing, in the same case, to do for him. I may quote upon this subject a small example that you know nothing about, although it concerns ourselves. It was upon the occasion of the note I wrote you, when I spoke of the Bastille in a very different sense to the one you gave my words. You wrote me a letter, very far from being angry or even impatient. You do not know how to write such letters to your friends—but where I saw you were displeased with mine. I was persuaded, and am still persuaded, that in this you were wrong, and I explained this in my reply. You had put forward certain maxims: that one should love all men alike, that one must be satisfied with others in order to be satisfied with one's self; that we are made for society and to support each other's faults, etc., etc. You had precisely started me on my own ground, and my letter was a good one—or at least I thought it so—and certainly you would have had to take time to reply to it. Ready to send it off, I looked through it again; it was written, you may be sure, in a tone of friendship, but with a certain warmth that I cannot avoid. I felt that you would not be more pleased with it than with my first letter, and that it might provoke a sort of altercation between us, of which I should be the originator. Directly, I threw my letter on the fire, resolved to let the discussion drop. I can't tell you with what satisfaction I saw my eloquent arguments burn to ashes, and you know that I have never

touched upon the subject again. My dear and kind friend, Pythagoras said that one must never stir the fire with a sword; this sentence appears to me the most important and the most sacred law of friendship. I have other pretentions with my friends, and these claims grow stronger as they become more dear to me; also, I shall be every day more exacting with you! But I must really finish this letter. Upon re-reading yours, I see that you announce the packet from Diderot, but it did not come with your letter; I received the packet some time before. Do not wonder if my hatred for Paris grows; except your letters, nothing but worry reaches me from there. If you wish to protest against my views on this matter you have the full right to. I shall receive your arguments well, but they will be useless. And when you see that, you will not continually repeat them."

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST CRIME AGAINST MADAME D'EPINAY: THE ANONYMOUS LETTER

We now know the true relations between Rousseau and Madame d'Epinay in the spring of 1757. From this position our judgment of their case must depend upon the certain or uncertain grounds of Jean Jacques' belief that his friend and hostess had acted the part of a spy upon him; that she had endeavoured to get possession of his private letters; and that she had used the information she had obtained by these base means, maliciously to stir up jealousy against him; and to sow division between the Marquis de Saint-Lambert and his mistress—her sister-in-law, the Countess d'Houdetot. If, after their long intimacy, her kind and thoughtful preparation of the Hermitage for him, her reliance upon his counsels in her difficulties, her readiness to afford him sympathy and counsel in his own troubles, Rousseau allowed himself *without convincing proofs of her guilt* to suspect Madame d'Epinay of these detestable actions, he was a traitor to his own code of noble friendship. But if the evidence put before him did not allow him to doubt Madame d'Epinay's treachery, then the proofs of her affection, which he had taken seriously, became so many injuries; and the wound was the more cruel and unforgivable, because it was dealt him in the house of a friend.

Before we examine whether it was possible for Rousseau to doubt the evidence upon which he based the charge he brought against Madame d'Epinay, it is necessary to establish definitely what the charge was.

For, here, the *Memoirs* have introduced a fable, that, adopted by Sevelinges in his libellous notice of Rousseau in the *Biographie Universelle*,[1] has assumed the form of an authentic historical fact, so that we have it generally reported by modern critics[2] that *Jean Jacques accused Madame d'Epinay of having written an anonymous letter to Saint-Lambert, informing him of the flirtations going on in the forest of Montmorency; and that the true author of this anonymous letter was, if not Rousseau himself, then Thérèse.*

Now about this anonymous letter:—not only the author of the *Confessions* does not mention it, but Diderot does not mention it either.

"The fine gentleman Rousseau," wrote the author of *Les Septs Scélératesses de J. J. Rousseau,* "accused Madame d'Epinay of having *either instructed M. de Saint-Lambert herself, or having had him instructed*, about his passion for Madame d'Houdetot."

("Il accusait Madame d'Epinay d'avoir ou instruit, ou fait instruire M. de Saint-Lambert de sa passion pour Madame d'Houdetot.")

If we consult the Arsenal Notes, we discover there the certain proof that this story about an anonymous letter, received by Saint-Lambert, was *not* told by Madame d'Epinay either, in her first version of this affair. For we find it suggested as one of the "changes to be made," in the following note.

[3] Arsenal MS. Cahier No. 18, Ref. 145 (149 vieux).

TRANSLATION.

"See whether after the letter begun, there should not be a narrative of the guardian which explains all René's intrigue:—and he made believe to accuse Madame de Montbrillant of having, in order to separate him from

[1] See page 46.
[2] By Saint-Marc Girardin, by Sainte-Beuve, and by E. Scherer.
[3] See Appendix, Note D D d.

the Countess, *written an anonymous letter to Dulaurier, accusing René and her (the Countess) of secret intimacy: it is certain that there was an anonymous letter written to Dulaurier—there are reasons to believe that it was by René himself.* Perhaps from this should one begin here about the intrigue with Garnier? Perhaps for this, one should make Dulaurier leave again?"

These "perhapses" show the free scope left to an inventor, who is not hampered by the necessity of relating facts as they were. We have the interpolated passage in the re-written cahier No. 141, as in the printed *Memoirs*, vol. iii. pp. 67–69.

TRANSLATION.

"For a right understanding of what may follow it should be known that René's passion for the Countess de Lange was very real. He knew her so devotedly attached to Dulaurier that he saw no other means of obtaining any hold upon her regard, except by destroying her faith in the Marquis. He was impeccable: there was no way of fastening suspicion on him, nor of attributing any blame to him, that would seem credible. Not to alarm the Countess, René was careful at first to hide the love he had conceived for her; and used all his warmth and eloquence to rouse in her scruples about her *liaison* with the Marquis. As this did not succeed, he pretended to believe that Madame de Montbrillant was also in love with the Marquis; and anxious to take him away from her sister-in-law. He gave it to be understood that he was not far from believing that the Marquis was much flattered. The Marquis himself in vain protested. René always made a jest of it; and persisted in giving an air of reality to this idea. He found a double advantage in this plan: for he awoke jealousy in the Countess, and thus separated her from her sister-in-law, whose penetration he dreaded. This jealousy having no real foundation, was calculated

to irritate the Marquis; to produce bitterness and perhaps a rupture between him and Madame de Lange. *Almost at the same time, the Marquis received an anonymous letter which told him that Madame de Lange and René were befooling him; and lived together on the most intimate and scandalous terms.* In proof of this charge were given real circumstances, but they were dressed up in such a way as to serve the calumnies put forward by the author of the letter. I always suspected *la petite Eloi*:[1] and this was the idea of almost all the witnesses of this adventure. Few men are sufficiently masters of themselves to mistrust appearances of truth; and these could only be overcome when compared with all the esteem due to the Countess. M. Dulaurier had with her a very lively explanation: after which, however, he did her the justice she deserved. As the Countess did not suspect René's sentiments for her, she confided to him the secret of this letter; and he was thrown consequently into so much anger and grief, that he became ill. In the search for an author he did not hesitate to name Madame de Montbrillant. 'Here is a crime,' he said, 'which her passion for the Marquis has made her commit. She no doubt thought by these means she would separate him from the Countess.' In short, he adopted, or pretended to adopt, this idea so positively, that notwithstanding all the Marquis and Countess could do, he behaved as though he had certain knowledge of it as a fact."

The story told by Rousseau in the *Confessions* is very different. Having conceived this inopportune passion for Madame d'Houdetot, Jean Jacques persuaded himself he was too old to be a dangerous rival to Saint-Lambert; and very far from making any secret of the matter, he confessed his plight to Madame d'Houdetot; who replied that though he was the most lovable man in the world, and though no one knew how to love so well,

[1] Thérèse; the first notion of making Rousseau himself the writer of the anonymous letter was probably recognized as too extravagant.

yet—Saint-Lambert stood between them.[1] This the docile and credulous Jean Jacques accepted quite literally —notwithstanding the fact that the inconstant wife of the Count d'Houdetot, who prided herself so much on being the constant mistress of the absent Marquis de Saint-Lambert, gave him frequent rendezvous in the forest of Montmorency: and at her château at Eaubonne, where the submissive Rousseau sighed, and she entertained him by rapturously describing her ardent passion for Saint-Lambert! In other words, it seems impossible to doubt that Madame d'Houdetot—who, like her sister-in-law Madame d'Epinay, had undergone her sentimental training in the epoch when Manon Lescaut was queen of hearts, played off upon the literal Jean Jacques the same (perhaps half-conscious) comedy that, in earlier days, Madame d'Epinay enacted with M. de Francueil; when she had appointed a moonlight meeting, wherein he was to be corrected of all sentiments that did not fall in with the scrupulously platonic relations she professed to desire.[2] Madame d'Houdetot, who was in her sister-in-law's confidence, knew certainly what had been the result of Madame d'Epinay's excessive confidence in M. de Francueil. Yet this lady, with a husband and a lover at the wars, did not hesitate to repeat, under still more perilous circumstances, the same experiment that had ended so badly in her cousin's case! She invited Jean Jacques to sup with her alone, at midnight, in the garden of her château at Eaubonne. Every one recollects the memorable scene, described by the author of the *Confessions*, who was also the author of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*; the dethroner of Manon, and the restorer of the cult of romantic love:—

[1] *Confessions*, part ii.

[2] See *Memoirs*, vol. i. page 140. "*Il n'est pas dans mes principes*," said Madame de Montbrillant to de Formeuse, "*de me croire autorisé par la conduite de mon mari d'avoir un amant; de plus, je l'aime-vous pauvez compter surce que je vous dis là: et vous pouvez compter sur la tendre amitié que je vous promets*," and a great deal more;—one thinks one is listening to Madame d'Houdetot!

"Il y avait six mois qu'elle vivait seule, c'est à dire loin de son amant, et de son mari :—il y avait trois que je la voyais presque tous les jours, et toujours l'amour en tiers entre elle et moi. Nous avions soupé tête-à-tête : nous étions seul, dans un bosquet, au clair de la lune : et après deux heures de l'entretien le plus vif, et le plus tendre, elle sortit, au milieu de la nuit, de ce bosquet, et des bras de son ami, aussi intacte, aussi pure de corps, et de cœur, qu'elle y était entrée." (*Confessions*, pt. ii., liv. ix.)

But was Madame d'Houdetot as entirely gratified as Rousseau supposed she was, by this docility? There are verses and sayings of this lady which go to prove her a far less probable convert to the cult of romantic love than even Madame d'Epinay. In any case the forest walks and meetings by appointment at La Chevrette and at Eaubonne, plainly, after this supper, began to pall on Madame d'Houdetot: and *they had been a vexation all the time to Madame d'Epinay.* That lady, too, had a lover at the wars. Grimm was acting as secretary to the Maréchal d'Estrées in Westphalia; where Saint-Lambert was serving with his regiment. It does not seem unreasonable that Madame d'Epinay should have suffered in her pride, and in her heart too, to see her *bon cher ami*, her "Ours," *her* hermit, whose retreat *she* had built for him, entertaining by philosophic reflections, and enchanting by romantic rhapsodies, not her own grass widowhood, but the grass widowhood of the mistress of the Marquis de Saint-Lambert who was comparatively a new friend! And to understand the position accurately, one has to realize that Madame d'Epinay and Madame d'Houdetot were cousins, as well as sisters-in-law; that they had grown up together; that no one can read the *Memoirs* attentively, especially in the manuscripts, without discovering that, whilst in almost every other case when the amiable authoress appears malicious, it is because she expresses the dislikes of Grimm, when she is

malicious at the expense of Madame d'Houdetot (and she is so very often), the dislike she expresses is evidently her own. Here, indeed, we find the censors who undertake the revision of the original version toning down on several occasions Madame de Montbrillant's outbursts against the Countess de Lange and her "insupportability."

It is time to reach the dénouement. Jean Jacques calls one day at Eaubonne and finds Madame d'Houdetot in tears. "They have betrayed us," she says. In other words, Saint-Lambert has been informed of their frequent walks and meetings: and he has written angrily to his mistress. Rousseau is full of self-reproach and distress. But who can the mischief-maker have been? Madame d'Houdetot at once settles the question. It is her cousin, Madame d'Epinay: who has before this endeavoured to sow division between herself and her lover. Rousseau, weighing the matter, can find no other possible solution. Grimm is near Saint-Lambert: and Madame d'Epinay is certainly in constant communication with Grimm.

If we turn to the *Memoirs*, we find that this theory is plainly supported by the evidence, even as it is given there. The interpolated episode of the anonymous letter does not conceal from the attentive reader the fact that Volx received from Madame de Montbrillant long letters giving him frequent accounts of the goings on of the Countess de Lange; of her singular lightheartedness in view of the absence of her lover; and of her frequent meetings with René, and their mysterious intimacy. It is also said that Volx and Dulaurier exchange letters. In these circumstances the anonymous letter was not needed to arouse the jealousy of the absent lover: *it was needed, in the story, to exonerate Madame de Montbrillant.* But Rousseau's conviction that Madame d'Epinay was the mischief-maker did not merely rest upon Madame d'Houdetot's assertions, and upon the difficulty of finding any one

else who could possibly have informed the Marquis in Westphalia of what was taking place in the forest of Montmorency. Thérèse Levasseur now came forward with a strange confirmatory story. She declared that Madame d'Epinay secretly endeavoured to persuade her to steal and bring her the letters Madame d'Houdetot wrote to Rousseau: that when she, Thérèse, replied that Rousseau tore up these letters when he had read them, Madame d'Epinay urged her to collect and bring her the pieces, and that they could be put together with care! Thérèse further stated that upon one occasion when Rousseau had slept at the Chevrette, a letter from Eaubonne arrived at the Hermitage, and that she had taken it to the Chevrette; and that Madame d'Epinay had endeavoured to snatch it from her; and when she had concealed it, had held her, whilst she looked for it in her apron. In the very hour, as ill-luck would have it, when Jean Jacques was burning with indignation at these revelations, came a caressing little note from his hostess, inviting him to pass a week at La Chevrette. He replied evasively at first, that until certain doubts in his mind were cleared away he could not meet her; she answered with friendly anxiety for his distress and claiming his confidence. He then lost his head: and replied that she had forfeited his confidence and would find it difficult to recover it: and he went on to explain, without naming the personages concerned, that an effort had been made to divide two lovers, and that his name had been used to awaken the jealousy of one of them. Madame d'Epinay replied that she was innocent of any effort to divide these lovers, who were "as dear to her as to Jean Jacques himself." She implored her old friend to do her justice; and not condemn her unheard; and she ended by declaring that she was only too anxious to forgive him.

Rousseau, who recognized that he had been imprudent, went to the Chevrette in great alarm, and then—what one might expect happened! Madame d'Epinay, who

knew she had been in the wrong in exhaling her impatience and irritation against the flirtations of Madame d'Houdetot in her letters to Grimm, melted into tears when she saw her favourite old friend, her "bear," whom she did not intend to injure; and the poor "bear," who did not understand how it had happened, but who, in sight of the dear lady who built him his retreat, could not believe, in spite of the evidence which stared him in the face, that she had meant him unkindness, burst into tears also. The two old friends embraced each other: the quarrel was patched up without any explanation, and things went on outwardly as before.

Before examining what Madame d'Epinay's faults really were against Rousseau upon this occasion, we have to decide the much more important question to us, of whether Rousseau can be shown guilty of the "crime" of base suspiciousness against an old friend; if not of ingratitude towards a benefactress? We have to decide further whether there were any grounds for the charge made by Diderot of falsity against Rousseau, in that he wept at Madame d'Epinay's feet, and implored her pardon for his unjust suspicions; yet repeated the same accusations against her behind her back.

We shall find it proved that Rousseau committed neither of these crimes.

He was not basely suspicious; nor was it his diseased imagination which suggested to him that Madame d'Epinay had been the tale-bearer who had revealed to the Marquis in Westphalia what was going on in the forest of Montmorency. But *Madame d'Houdetot* informed him that her lover had been made jealous by some tale-bearer; and that she believed the mischief-maker was Madame d'Epinay, who had already tried to stir up strife between herself and Saint-Lambert.

Again Rousseau had no suspicion that Madame d'Epinay had abused her position by endeavouring to gain over Thérèse to her ends; *but Thérèse herself* amazed him by the assertion that the lady had en-

deavoured by bribes and threats to persuade her to steal from him Madame d'Houdetot's letters.

In other words, Rousseau was compelled to believe Madame d'Epinay guilty of these acts of treachery by the difficulty of discovering any one else who could have made mischief with Saint-Lambert; and by the impossibility of supposing that the "simple and honest" Thérèse was either intellectually or morally capable of fabricating the story she related to him.

Again, when we test the truth of the assertion that Rousseau described Madame d'Epinay as the blackest of women behind her back, whilst to her face he abjectly implored her pardon for all his faults, we find that the very opposite of this was true.

We find that after hearing Thérèse's story, Rousseau did not secretly, nor publicly, accuse Madame d'Epinay, but that with perfect loyalty to her in her character of an old friend, he wrote to her informing her that his confidence in her was shaken and that he suspected her of using his name to sow disunion between two lovers who were his friends, thus giving her the opportunity of demanding an explanation.

It is true that when Madame d'Epinay did not seize this opportunity, but, in her first interview with him after his denunciatory letter, instead of requiring, or offering more information, burst into tears, and embraced him, Rousseau, moved by these signs of distress and affection, had not the courage to sift the matter out nor to tax Madame d'Epinay with the odious action attributed to her by Thérèse.

But neither did he accuse her of the odious action behind her back; and Diderot's letter, quoted by him in proof of his assertion that, after the temporary reconciliation, Jean Jacques had persisted in accusing Madame d'Epinay as the blackest of women, actually proves the contrary. This letter (which will presently be given) was written to urge Rousseau to accompany Madame d'Epinay to Geneva. It contains this phrase, "if you

are satisfied with Madame d'Epinay, you ought to accompany her; if you are dissatisfied with her, all the more reason is there for going." So that Diderot does not know the position at the moment; and although his words indicate that he is aware there has been some cause of dissatisfaction, they also prove that Rousseau could not have told him the facts. For even the tyrannical Encyclopædist could hardly have esteemed it a reason that made it all the more necessary for Jean Jacques to follow this lady to Geneva that he knew she had bribed a woman living under his protection to steal his private letters?

So that with regard to these charges we find that Rousseau was not guilty of base or insane suspicions against a tried friend, but that his belief in Madame d'Epinay's treachery was the inevitable conclusion he drew from the facts disclosed by Madame d'Houdetot and by Thérèse; that in these circumstances he was not guilty of falsity, weeping at Madame d'Epinay's knees and traducing her behind her back; but that he behaved in an exactly opposite manner, at once informing her of his suspicions; and behind her back, refraining from all mention of these suspicions, when justifying himself to others from the charge of ingratitude towards her.

We have now to see what light is thrown upon Madame d'Epinay's true behaviour, and her sentiments towards Rousseau and Madame d'Houdetot, by a curious document which indubitably belongs to this period; and which, in all probability, represents the identical and original cause of Saint-Lambert's dissatisfaction with his mistress. Whilst Grimm was in Westphalia, Madame d'Epinay, for her own entertainment as well as his, sent him several literary portraits of their mutual friends, and a much too flattering portrait of himself, reproduced in the *Memoirs*. These portraits (with some letters of her own to Tronchin, a letter in verse to the Marquis de Saint-Lambert, a poem addressed to Grimm, as "Tyran le Blanc," and a letter to her from Desmahis, also in verse)

MADAME D'HOUDETOT

(From a Portrait engraved by Corot.)

The portrait must be flattered. Rousseau says: "She was not beautiful, her face was marked with small-pox and her complexion lacked delicacy; she was short-sighted and her eyes were round; but with all that she had an air of youthfulness, and her expression, at once lively and sweet, was fascinating. She had a forest of dark hair which curled naturally and reached to her knees, her figure was charming and her movements at once awkward and graceful."—*Confessions*, Part. II. liv. ix.

The Countess Allard says of Madame d'Houdetot: "Although Rousseau admits she was not beautiful, he saw her in the light of illusions. It should be a consolation to ugly women to learn that Madame d'Houdetot was very ugly and owed to her wit and charming character the passionate and constant love she received. She was well made, and as she had had the famous Marcel for dancing-master, she was graceful. Her bust was beautiful, her hands and arms pretty, her feet very small."

[*To face page* 251.

Madame d'Epinay had printed at Geneva in 1758, for private circulation amongst her friends, in a small volume entitled *Mes Moments Heureux.*

The book was printed in the interval between the final rupture with Rousseau, in December 1757, and Grimm's arrival at Geneva, in February 1759. One has only to read the *Portrait of Madame H——* to realize how annoyed Tyran le Blanc must have been at this imprudence. Madame d'Epinay's liking for Rousseau and her antipathy to Madame H—— were secrets which lent an entirely new aspect to the quarrel as reported by himself and Diderot. The little volume, too, contained other indiscretions. Voltaire was lightly treated in comparison with Rousseau. Madame d'Epinay was shown much too interested in Saint-Lambert; and Desmahis appeared on by far too familiar terms with a lady who had obtained the distinction, and promotion to the honourable rank, of mistress to M. Grimm. So the little book was suppressed. And it is with reference to this volume, and not to the *Memoirs*, that Madame d'Epinay's reply to Sedaine, quoted by MM. Perey and Maugras, must be read. Some copies of this rare little volume exist, and one can be consulted *en reserve* at the Bibliothèque Nationale.

PORTRAIT DE MADAME H——.

"Since my earliest childhood, I have lived on intimate terms with Madame H. I have always had a liking for her But only within the last two years have I truly desired to make a friend of her. I have always recognized in her frankness, good faith, sweet temper, patience and a trustworthiness beyond fault. . . . . Never any mischievous gossip from her; and her merit for this is all the greater, because she is naturally absent-minded, childish and thoughtless. She was entirely absorbed by a passion of six months' standing when, in May 1753,[1] I invited her to pass some time with me in the country.

[1] The date of the birth of de Francueil's son.

I thought I should find in her an amiable companion, so taken up with her passion that she would not worry me in my own ways of life. But soon I felt for her real friendship, and the most tender interest. In the end she gave me all her confidence; and on my side I had no secrets from her. I stipulated, however, that she should never talk about anything that concerned me to her lover; and I am persuaded that she kept her word. She is capable of hiding from him secrets which do not concern him: she knows even how to endure his suspicions, rather than to prove false to the confidence shown her. This time in the country, up to the moment of Madame d'H.'s departure, appeared charming to me. *Nevertheless some thoughtless and imprudent actions of hers made me from time to time regret that I was in her confidence. Some fads which I remarked in her sometimes irritated me against her: but this irritation hardly betrayed itself except when I was tormented by other troubles. Then, as these fads are entirely opposed to my own character, they became insupportable to me. Such are, for instance: her habit of never being ready in time for anything; of waiting until other people are eating dessert, before beginning her dinner; of helping herself from every dish, and eating nothing; of constantly wearing an absent air, especially when her lover is away; of leaving about the room everything belonging to her; of constantly forgetting where she is; and what she has to do.* Here are the chief defects that I find in her. She left me in the month of June and returned to her country seat; where I went to join her in the month of September. I found her much less glad to see me than I had expected. Her lover remained in Paris. She spoke very little about him, and as she dawdles on interminably [1] upon what interests her, I thought her taste for him had grown less. Two days after I found her in despair at not having heard from him! But the next day, she was as gay as

[1] "*elle rabâche.*"

usual! All this appeared strange to me. Nevertheless these observations did not diminish my friendship for her: they only decided me to have no part in an affair that promised badly, and where I might find myself compromised without being of any use to my friend. *Above all, I did not observe any very lively devotion on the lover's side in return for hers. His conduct on several occasions appeared to me very light. I risked speaking to him upon the subject unknown to Madame H. I was not satisfied with his replies*—in short, I foresaw misfortunes. I returned to Paris, and eight days afterwards the affair was betrayed. The husband, who saw by the letters that fell into his hands that I was mixed up in the business, spoke of me in an abominable way. I had with him a conversation of the sort I was bound to have.[1] The danger where I saw Madame H. frightened me so much *that I tried to let her understand the judgment I had formed upon the conduct of her lover. But this was done with all possible consideration for her sensibility. She did not listen to me; and if she understood me I do not doubt that she bore me ill will for it.* Nevertheless I still tried to be useful to her by restraining her imprudence; but then the same reasons I had before induced me little by little to lessen our intimacy. I took no notice of her affairs; and soon she appeared to have entirely forgotten me. It was not that she loved me less, but that she could not dilate to me upon the love of what she held most dear. As I always take the same interest in her, I was careful from time to time to keep myself informed of her situation. She has retained her taste for M——, and this affection appeared to me this winter, on both sides more lively than ever. The long absence of her lover has, it seems to me, served only to increase it. Two months ago, as I intended to establish myself at the country house earlier than usual, I invited Madame H. to come, seeing no objection in the way of yielding to my pleasure in her

[1] J'eus avec lui une conversation telle que je la devais avoir.

society. The absence of her lover, and the permission I gave her husband to visit me again, removed all the obstacles which before stood in the way of these arrangements and the gratification of my liking for her. She accepted my proposal. I began to see her much oftener and with much more pleasure; because I found her much more interested in what was going on around her. *One of my friends being at the time in a frightful state of health, she appeared to take the most lively interest in him, although she knew him very slightly; and she gave him upon this occasion all the signs of the greatest friendship. All this appeared very simple; for I know no creature living more interesting than he is, nor more full of sensibility than she is. At the end of three weeks, however, the advances she made to him, and some notes that fell into my hands,*[1] *led me to believe that he had turned her head.* However, I noticed no change in her, and I suspected that she nourished this sentiment in secret, and without herself recognizing it. But I have been cured of this idea by an observation I have made since we came down to the country, and which is explained by what I have already said of her character. *Her impatience to see him is extreme and vivacious; but when he arrives, and she has wished him good-day, she pays no more attention to him and appears to forget his presence—avec elle, pas de lendemain.* During the month we have passed together I noticed that she has corrected the indolence that once so displeased me in her. Her fads remain the same; but as I am no longer made irritable by trouble they do not worry me. I love her tenderly. The fear of finding myself too much mixed up in her affairs when her lover returns could alone prevent me from giving myself up to my inclination for her.

"I conclude that, on the whole, no other woman can compare with Madame H——. Her mind and heart are excellent, although her head might lead her to commit

[1] How did these notes fall into Madame d'Epinay's hands?

many a fault. She is light, but she is constant. *Her lightness consists in that pleasure or pain leave hardly any trace with her. Every feeling is effaced all the more promptly because in the first moment she feels vividly*—avec elle, pas de lendemain. She is as true in friendship as she is tender in love. Never has she said or thought evil of any one; and whoever undertakes to criticize will end, as I do, by praising her."

In connection with the sincerity of the "tender love" professed by Madame d'Epinay for Madame d'H—— notwithstanding her "insupportable fads," several passages from the Archives and Arsenal Manuscript—toned down by later corrections—are found in the old cahiers. Thus in 142 cahier (which has been re-produced as the 137 cahier) one reads: "I have had a visit from the Countess de Lange. *She appeared more feverish and haggard than ever, shrieking like a blind woman (criant comme une aveugle)—really I think she is going mad: my companion was deafened by her; and I was bored to extinction. She threatens us with a visitation of several days here with her sister-in-law, the Countess de B. I shall try to get out of it if I can without wounding her feelings. The countess wishes* to make the acquaintance of Milord and Lady Wilx.[1] I shall not mix myself up in it. Ladi, who has never seen her, does not like her; on the contrary, if milord speaks about it to me I shall beg him not to let any politeness towards me influence him. And whilst praising the heart and soul of the Countess, I shall not make any secret of her insupportability (en faisant d'ailleurs l'éloge du cœur et de l'âme de la Comtesse je ne tairai pas son insupportabilité").

The Portrait of Madame H—— makes quite intelligible to us, what Mr. Morley describes as a "*puzzle that can never be found out; or be worth finding out.*"[2] It *is* worth finding out, for those who desire to know Rousseau as he really was, that he did not write an

[1] *Holbachs.* [2] Vol. i. p. 278.

anonymous letter to the lover of a woman he had attempted to seduce; and then accuse another person of writing it.[1] It is also worth while to find out that he was not a suspicious maniac, who without just grounds imagined a tried friend had betrayed him.[2] Nor yet an ungrateful impostor who, to escape from his obligation to a benefactress, invented false charges against her.[3] The final dismissal of all these theories is the result of the key to the puzzle given by Madame d'Epinay's own admission in this document.

My discovery in 1897 of the Portrait of Madame H—— two years after the publication of my *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, proved to me that I was wrong when, in that work, I expressed the opinion that though Rousseau could not be described as "basely suspicious" because he believed in the honesty of his humble life companion Thérèse, he probably did Madame d'Epinay injustice when he accepted from Thérèse her assertion that the lady of La Chevrette had stooped to the meanness of reading Madame d'Houdetot's letters. In the face of Madame d'Epinay's own admission, found in this document, that "*some letters that fell into her hands led her to believe that Rousseau had turned Madame d'Houdetot's head*," one can no longer describe Madame d'Epinay as incapable of this act. How should these letters have fallen into her hands, unless Thérèse were mixed up in it? At the risk of letting partiality for Madame d'Epinay make one too indulgent, I think we may still disbelieve the story that the lady of "good society" attempted either by bribery or force to obtain Rousseau's private letters. As we have no positive evidence to decide it, the question remains an open one. But there is an episode in the *Memoirs* that seems to me to give a clue to the probable answer :—

[1] Theory of Sevelinges.
[2] Theory of Sainte-Beuve.
[3] Theory of Saint-Marc Girardin and of E. Scherer.

Madame de Montbrillant writes to Volx, telling him that René's housekeepers, mother and daughter, are jealous, and mystified by René's constant meetings with the Countess de Lange.

"I was obliged," the lady writes,[1] "to stop them in their confidences, which threatened to become scandalous. They have found a letter—what about I don't know, for I wouldn't let them go into details. I said to the petite Eloi (Thérèse), 'My child, when one finds other people's letters left about, one either throws them on the fire without reading them or gives them back to those to whom they belong.'"

I think we may believe that the Levasseurs were mystified, that Thérèse was jealous; that she took the letter, or letters, to Madame d'Epinay; that the lady—jealous also—did not say what she ought to have said, but that she did what she ought not to have done; *and read the letters?*

But if the extent of Madame d'Epinay's guilt be an open question—what this document establishes as a positive historical fact is that *every charge brought against her by Rousseau is proved.* Taking the most indulgent view of her case, her own admissions show that she had on earlier occasions interfered mischievously between Madame d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert;[2] that she had read letters written by her cousin to Rousseau; that upon information derived by these dishonest means she based the opinion that he had turned Madame d'Houdetot's head; and that she communicated this news to Grimm, whom she knew as a hater of Rousseau, and in close communication with Saint-Lambert. After this, who is going to deny that Madame d'Epinay was

[1] MS. cahier 142, *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 6.

[2] See *Portrait of Madame H.* Madame d'Epinay speaks to Saint-Lambert, *unknown to Madame d'Houdetot*, about this *liaison;* she speaks to the Count d'Houdetot; she speaks to Madame d'Houdetot; and tries "to let her understand the judgment she has formed upon the conduct of her lover, viz. that he is light and does not show a lively devotion," etc.

responsible for the angry letter from the Marquis which threw Madame d'Houdetot into tears?

But in all this, Madame d'Epinay's spitefulness was directed not against Jean Jacques himself, but against Madame d'Houdetot? That is true: and one feels that Rousseau himself recognized it, and that the tone of his indignation would have perhaps been more restrained had he felt himself the chief sufferer, or the person intended to suffer, at the hands of one who had shown him much kindness. But the unkindness *done through him* to the woman he loved, did not allow him to be patient.

In this contemporary document, where Madame d'Epinay's evidence comes to us before it had been tampered with by Grimm or Diderot, we find a key to another puzzle—this one: *what did Madame d'Houdetot mean by it all?*

Was she a selfish coquette, who fostered Rousseau's passion merely to gratify her vanity? But then every one agrees in describing her as a very amiable woman.

Had she, then, a secret inclination for Jean Jacques? and did she hope that, in view of the forest walks and midnight suppers, he would have the good sense not to take her professed constancy to Saint-Lambert too literally? But when she saw how very literal he was, could she not have made her meaning more clear?

Or was she actually an ingénue? and did she honestly believe that the way to cure a man suffering and sick from love was to torment his passion? But then she was twenty-eight years old; a Society woman with a distinct talent for equivocal jokes and licentious poetry; and with a lover whose powers as a conversationalist displayed themselves especially in the style popularly known in French as the one that breaks window-panes.

Madame d'Epinay, with her peculiar talent of "sketching to the soul" the personages she calls up before us, leaves the puzzle found out—*Madame d'Houdetot meant none of these things, simply because her actions had no purpose; were without consequences in her view of them;*

had no meaning. This casual and vehement Madame H——, with her "fads" *(ses tics)* of "never being punctual, of leaving everything about,[1] of beginning to eat when other people have finished; of wearing an abstracted air, and *never knowing where she is or what she is doing,*" yet with gusts of desperate eagerness, and fussy haste and impatience, how well one understands her "insupportability" to the vivacious and capable Madame d'Epinay: who, for her part, always knows where she is and what she is doing, and has no patience with "fads" entirely foreign to her character. But the Portrait of Madame H. not only helps us to understand why Madame d'Epinay couldn't abide her cousin and sister-in-law; and why, seeing her hermit the prey of whims he mistook for sentiments, and preferred to the firm affection of nine years' standing, she lost her temper, and behaved thoroughly badly and meanly, to Madame d'Houdetot; but not *by intention to Jean Jacques.* It shows us also why Madame d'Houdetot behaved so meanly and badly, or at any rate so mischievously, to her unlucky adorer: and how mistaken have been those of his admirers who, following his own example, have idealized this light-headed, light-hearted being; whose lightness, as her clear-sighted sister-in-law explained, "belonged to her character: and was the result of the promptitude with which her most vehement feelings were effaced and left no trace behind them." *Elle est légère en ce que le plaisir et la peine ne laissent guère de traces chez elle, tout s'efface avec d'autant plus de promptitude qu'elle sent vivement dans le premier instant. Avec elle pas de lendemain.*

In this way, and for the sufficient reason that we are dealing with a lady for whom there "is no to-morrow," and who has no clear sense of where she is nor what she is doing, we may cease to ask ourselves *why* Madame d'Houdetot, wishing to remain constant to

[1] "M. de Saint-Lambert ne rend rien *parce que il communique tout à Madame d'Houdetot qui perd tout.*"—Diderot à Mlle. Volland, 1761.

Saint-Lambert, made rendezvous in woods and bosquets at midnight with the love-lorn Jean Jacques; *why*, having gone to the uttermost limits of imprudence, she suddenly became cold and prudent, without cause; *why*, having insisted upon his committing the error of consulting Grimm, she afterwards, when mischief came of her advice, turned round and blamed him for having followed it? *Why*, having protested that her undying affection and esteem should always he his, never mind what other people might say of him, at the very first hint that public favour was turning against him, she wrote to him to say that her reputation required she should break off their friendship? The explanation and exoneration of this conduct is given by Madame d'Epinay: *it belonged to Mme. d'Houdetot's character:* "Avec elle pas de lendemain."

CHAPTER IV

THE RECONCILIATION WITH GRIMM

After Saint-Lambert's visit to Montmorency, in July, and his return to join his regiment, Madame d'Houdetot became, as has been said, cold and prudent, all too late in the day. She reclaimed from Jean Jacques her letters: and informed him she had burnt his. Far from arranging romantic meetings, she avoided him. Rousseau, in his distress at the change, and convinced in conscience that he had not merited it, fretted himself into ill-health. Madame d'Epinay, always thoughtful and ready with sympathy, played the part of comforter: and something more than a semblance of friendship between herself and her "bear" was renewed. In August, Rousseau wrote his letter to Saint-Lambert (of which more will be heard later on). Madame d'Epinay went to Paris to be with the wife of the Baron d'Holbach in her confinement: and the correspondence between herself and Rousseau shows that they had fallen back into the old habits of affection. But there was a voluntary forgetfulness between them of doubts and of faults, that remained unexplained and unacknowledged—in short, the seed of distrust had been sown: and Grimm came back from Westphalia, in September, very determined that the seeds should come to flower.

Rousseau says in the *Confessions* that Grimm's undisguised insolence towards him was so unendurable, that it became impossible to ignore it longer. He relates how, having been invited by Madame d'Epinay to sup with her, Grimm entered the room before they had commenced the meal, and finding only two places laid, took Rousseau's seat, unfolded his napkin, and turning

his back on the discountenanced Jean Jacques, commenced to converse with Madame d'Epinay as though no one else were present. Madame d'Epinay, he says, blushed, rose and offered Jean Jacques her seat, but showed no outward sign of indignation against Grimm. Rousseau says, he sought in vain to discover upon what grounds Grimm assumed towards him this disdainful air. "In what way," he asks, "was I the subject of this new patron? I had lent him money, he had never lent me any; I had watched him in his illness, in mine he never came near me; I had given him all my friends, he never gave me any. I had published his praises in all directions; if he spoke of me, it was less publicly and in another sense; and the tone of commiseration he affected towards me, served less to win me sympathy than to depreciate me. He took from me even, in so far as he was able, the advantages of the trade I had chosen, by describing me as a bad copyist. I am willing to admit he may have been right to some extent, but it was not for him to say it. He proved, too, that it was not a mere joke, by employing a different copyist himself, and by leaving me none of the clients he could take from me. All this in the end wore out my old attachment which spoke for him a long time. I judged his character as untrustworthy, and as for his friendship, I decided that it was false. Resolved then to break with him, I warned Madame d'Epinay of this, justifying my resolution by several facts which admitted of no reply. She strongly combated my decision, without well knowing what to say about my reasons. At that time, she had not yet talked it over with him. But the following day, instead of explaining her views verbally, she gave me a very clever letter, where she insisted upon his (Grimm's) reserved character as the cause of our misunderstanding. In the conversation that we had afterwards, I finished by letting myself be convinced that I had misjudged him."[1]

Rousseau goes on to say that he allowed himself to

[1] *Confessions*, part ii., liv. viii.

be persuaded to make the first advances. That Grimm received him as a schoolmaster might have done an offending pupil, lectured him upon his faults, and upon his own (Grimm's) virtues ; especially insisting upon the fact that he (Grimm) never lost a friend, whereas Rousseau was quarrelsome ; and finally dismissing him, with a dignified condescension that so imposed upon Rousseau that he went away searching out his heart to find what could be the meaning of this assumed air of superiority. The results of Rousseau's consent to Madame d'Epinay's entreaties were that he had to endure the same rudeness from Grimm as before, but he had sacrificed his right to show indignation or resentment.

The story of the *Memoirs* given in the 144th new cahier is different : but Volx shows the same temper of ineffable disdain as Grimm. It is René who pleads with Madame de Montbrillant to make his peace with Volx. Madame de Montbrillant, with the displeasing tone which the real Madame d'Epinay never employs, tells the hermit René that he must show his contrition if he wishes Volx to receive him back to friendship. René promises he will humiliate himself as required : but when the moment comes, he merely stretches out his hand to Volx and says, " Come now, my dear Volx, let us henceforth live on friendly terms, and forget reciprocally all that has passed." Volx began to laugh. " I swear to you," he said, " that what has passed, in so far as you are concerned, does not in the least preoccupy me."

Both narratives then show that Grimm met Rousseau's advances with odious insolence. But the *Memoirs* say that René felt himself a culprit towards the ineffable Volx : and the *Confessions* that Madame d'Epinay urged Rousseau to end the quarrel.

Again we have documentary evidence to prove that the story given in the *Confessions* is the true one : the evidence, namely, of Madame d'Epinay's true letter.

"*October*, 1757.[1]

"If you were in your natural state I should let you reflect alone; but, my friend, I see only too well how your soul is ulcerated and saddened by the bitterness that comes from suffering.[2] I repeat what I said, I am in your heart, and I read it better than yourself even. But that is not enough; I would wish to be always near you, to hold the balance between what is natural to you and the gloomy humour your state of health tends to foster. So then I am writing to beg you to reflect. The step I beg you to take is also urged upon you by your own heart. Why will you not listen to it? You were softened for a few minutes, and that tells me enough—is it worthy of such a man as you to let sophistries harden you in your faults? *You cannot possibly be the dupe of the accusations you make against your friend;*[3] if you had any right to suspect him, you would also have a right to despise him, and you would not be the master of the necessity to do this. Ah, certainly in this case nothing could have softened you, and you would be delighted with this indifference you confess is the feeling you would like to have for him, and which, I promise you, you never will feel. But examine a little your mutual situation. You have known him, you say, yourself, the most lovable of men by the qualities of his heart, but always cold externally. That is in him. You cannot then expect demonstrations of affection from an undemonstrative man. You loved him like that for three years, and you admit that he was the man whom you loved most tenderly. At the end of three years, your state having filled you with bitterness, you found him full of faults. But for my part, I don't know what people mean when they say of a friend, he has been to blame

[1] See Streckeisen-Moultou, vol. i. pp. 546–548.

[2] Rousseau's illness gave him acute attacks of physical suffering.

[3] Everything Rousseau suspected is more than admitted, even in the *Memoirs*.

with me in this way or that; here he showed want of confidence; there he failed in attention to me; he might have made this sacrifice for me, etc.—and then follows a coldness, that would have meant nothing had all been explained. Ah, let all these small miseries be left to hearts empty of true sentiment, and heads without ideas in them. It is good enough for those vulgar lovers whose senses only are agitated, and who, instead of the confidence and delicious emotions that in souls like yours enlarge their sentiments by virtue and philosophy, put small quarrels, which straiten the mind and sour the heart, and make people commonplace when they don't render them ridiculous. All the true facts that you complain of are small grievances of this character; which your black moods have taught you to add up against him. As for your chief charge,[1] I won't speak of it; it doesn't exist. That is proved by what has been said, and in your heart, and in mine, we know it is not true. But entirely imaginary as it be, this charge has been made against him by you to others than himself, or rather to all your friends, except to him. He is then the one who is offended, and he is all the more so because during two years you have done nothing to repair this offence. See then, my friend, if you even leave out of account the sentiments of your own heart, what, in justice, you ought to do.[2] Oh, how this act of justice should not only appear easy to you, but delightful, since it will restore you a friend you love, who loves you, and who only waits for a word from you, which he has a right to expect, to renew a friendship dear and precious to you both. . . . See the facts as they are in what concerns Grimm. His soul is true and upright, but a little reserved, naturally, and as a result of different troubles he has had. He is extremely sensitive, although unim-

[1] That Grimm tried to discredit his skill as a copyist: see pp. 63, 64, vol. ii.

[2] Madame d'Epinay here skilfully reminds Rousseau of his own maxim that the one who began the quarrel is the one who has to make the first advances.—See p. 237.

passioned, and born melancholy, which gives him an air of coldness, which, however, can only deceive those who do not know him. You know he is incapable of hiding what he feels or thinks; you have seen him avoid all whom he does not like, or remain entirely silent when he is with those who displease him. He is at ease with people he likes; he is frank and free and shows himself pleased in their society. These are the only demonstrations of friendship one can expect from him. Let the occasion show itself where one needs his help—towards people who are indifferent for him his natural benevolence might incline him to help them, but his idleness would prevent it; but let the interests of those he loves come into question, and his idleness becomes an activity that foresees everything, and leaves no stone unturned. His true sentiments for you are still in his heart; twenty times I have heard him say that had he known how much he would have grown to care for you he would have avoided you, so deeply did your sufferings afflict him. That is not the speech of an indifferent man. Twenty times, and even since you have ceased to be friends, he has talked to me about the means of finding what consolations friendship could bring in your troubles by finding you a retreat between the one you occupy where in winter your friends cannot reach you, and Paris which you avoid, and this shows how he thinks about you. I am merely performing a duty I owe to you both, and you know me well enough to be sure I am not writing either to offend or to flatter you. Yes, I will follow you in your reverie to the full stretch of your thoughts. You shall hear me say, in agreement with your conscience, I am persuaded she is right. And then you will ask yourself, 'What does she want of me? That I should reconcile myself with a friend whom I have offended, and who waits, in spite of this, with open arms to receive me.' And then can you be indifferent to the delightful and inexhaustible satisfaction of having accomplished a duty of which the recompense will be the happy

and tranquil days we shall all pass together here. Think of the happiness that will follow this step. Even suppose for a moment that you do not immediately find the same tenderness for each other you had once, will it be nothing to have got rid of the painful restraint that spoils for all three of us our enjoyment? But I promise you, this recompense will not be the only one.

"Here, my dear friend, is what the emotion and haste of talking about what I feel strongly, prevented me from saying fully in our conversation; besides, I fulfil my object better in writing to you about it, because I would wish to be constantly present with you, as a shadow of your happiness drawing you towards what is best for you in spite of yourself."

Now, with regard to this letter, we have to recollect that, when writing it, Madame d'Epinay knew she was (to state the case politely) mis-stating the facts. She knew that Rousseau's charge against Grimm—that he consistently spoke ill of him, and that he described him as a man who did not honestly practise the trade he professed to follow—was entirely true. She knew that Grimm did not love Rousseau, did not desire to serve him, was not waiting open-armed to receive him; and she knew, too, that Jean Jacques owed Grimm no apology, but that the real offender was Grimm himself. Inasmuch as we are not dealing with an inconsequent Madame d'Houdetot, but with a lady whose actions had a purpose, and who thought a good deal about the to-morrow, why did she lead her poor "bear" into the humiliations that followed his attempted reconciliation with a man who hated him?

There are two possible answers. The first is that Grimm told her to do this, and that she obeyed him. If we accept this answer (as Rousseau did), Madame d'Epinay's devotion to the new lover does not palliate her detestable treachery to her old friend. It fits in with the supposition that she did bribe Thérèse to give

up her protector's letters, and deliberately tried to injure him with Saint-Lambert, not out of jealousy, and because it provoked her to see him played with by the empty-headed Madame d'Houdetot, but out of love of mischief and malicious spite. It fits in with the theory that, in the episode we are going to examine, she shamefully plotted to compromise Jean Jacques in order to screen her real lover; and also with the theory that she, and not Grimm, poisoned the minds of his fellow citizens and betrayed his secrets. In other words, it fits in with the theory that Madame d'Epinay was a false and fickle woman, and that her professed kind-heartedness was sham sentiment and vanity. One does not need to be insanely suspicious to accept this theory; a great many facts seem to support it. But I may say that as the result of living many years in close and intimate spiritual relationships with Madame d'Epinay, handling her letters, following her in her weakness and her strength, her extraordinary ignorance, and unconsciousness of many essential qualities of what is, rightly, esteemed virtue in a woman, and yet in her unfailing virtues of a certain womanly and tender sort—kindness and friendliness particularly—I do not myself believe she ever wished to injure Rousseau or ever lost her regard for him.

A second answer, I suggest, fits in not only with the facts, but also with Madame d'Epinay's temperament and situation, between the lover (not by choice, but necessity) whose pet name was Tyran le Blanc, and the favourite old friend, whose own fault it was entirely if he held the secondary rank. It is that Madame d'Epinay, at her wit's end, played, against rules, the only strong card she had: and lost the game.

Grimm had come back determined Rousseau should go. We shall presently see what fresh mischance made Tyran le Blanc's mastership supreme in October, 1757. To keep her *bon cher ami*, her hermit, and to soften her tyrant's temper by flattering his vanity, Rousseau

was to be beguiled into advances, and almost into apologies, to a man who owed him much and who had paid him with injuries. Grimm accepted the offering to his vanity, and lectured the illustrious author of the *Discourses*, who stood to receive his lesson abashed. But that was all that happened! Madame d'Epinay's *ruse* had failed. Grimm remained as fixed as ever in his determination; and Rousseau remained astonished and indignant. And as he thought it out, the slumbering distrust of Madame d'Epinay became uneasy, and gradually wide awake.

CHAPTER V

THE JOURNEY TO GENEVA

We have now to see whether Rousseau was guilty of a "crime" against Madame d'Epinay, in that he did not offer to accompany her to Geneva, and whether the letter he wrote to Grimm upon this subject was a "prodigy of ingratitude."

Let us follow the real events, as they are related in the *Confessions*, and corroborated by evidence which proves Rousseau's account to be an entirely truthful one.

Early in October, Rousseau learns from Madame d'Epinay herself that she intends to start for Geneva to consult Tronchin. She does not explain herself more fully, and he asks no questions, although it strikes him as strange that she should undertake the journey in the late autumn. Inasmuch as Madame d'Epinay knew that he was almost always an invalid through the winter, and in any case liable to severe attacks of a terribly painful character, it did not enter his head to suppose that she desired him to accompany her; nor is there any reason for supposing that Madame d'Epinay herself had any thought of involving her friend Jean Jacques in an awkward history where he was not concerned. Rousseau, after hearing from the lady herself about her intended journey, is told by Thérèse, upon his return to the Hermitage, what the motive of this journey is. He does not further explain the case in the *Confessions*, and uninitiated readers might consequently esteem his indignation excessive at the effort of Diderot —prompted as he believed by Grimm—to make him

Madame d'Epinay's travelling companion to his native city.

The reason for Madame d'Epinay's journey, and for a prolonged sojourn at a safe distance from too curious friends, who knew her domestic circumstances, was, by Thérèse's account, that the same accident which had happened in 1753 had again arisen, to threaten with paternal relationships somebody—who was certainly *not* M. d'Epinay! The lady's quasi-matrimonial relationships with Grimm were not a secret in her own circle. But let it be remembered that in public it was better known that Jean Jacques, the virtuous citizen of Geneva, had been for eighteen months leading a retired life in a hermitage built for him by Madame d'Epinay, and then let it be denied that had he unwarily allowed himself to have been persuaded to personally conduct his hostess to Geneva in these circumstances, he would have been made the laughing-stock of Europe.

It has been said that Jean Jacques ought not to have believed the story told him by Thérèse, who had gathered this scandalous gossip from the servants. The reply to this observation is that the "gossip" is almost admitted in the *Memoirs* to be true. We find special care taken there to mention the entirely uninteresting fact, *except in its connection with the attempt to explain the birth of a child in Madame d'Epinay's household during her stay at Geneva*,—that her lady's-maid Dubuisson deceived her mistress about her state of health before starting: and was confined at Geneva in June 1758, at the very time when her mistress was seriously ill; and had to be looked after by a stranger.

In any case, Rousseau, who knew all about M. de Francueil's case, had no special reason for doubting the information given him; and the very rumour was enough to lend exasperation to a new attempt of Diderot's to dictate to him what he ought to do; and to insist that, never mind what were his condition of health or his pecuniary resources, he was bound by the

overwhelming character of his obligations to Madame d'Epinay to accompany her to Geneva.

Here is the authentic letter given in the *Confessions* and by M. Streckeisen-Moultou, who reproduces it from the autograph letter at Neuchatel :—

"14*th October*, 1757.

"It is my fate to love you, and to cause you vexation! I hear that Madame d'Epinay is going to Geneva ; and I do not hear that you accompany her. My friend, if you are pleased with Madame d'Epinay, you should go with her—but if you are displeased with her, you should go all the more quickly. Are you over-burthened with the weight of the obligations you have to her? Here is an opportunity for partly paying them, and thus lightening your load. Will you ever find another opportunity in your life for proving your gratitude? She is going to a country where she will be as one fallen from the clouds : she is ill : she needs amusements and distractions. It is winter—the objection of your health may be stronger than I know it to be. But are you more ill to-day than you were a month ago, or than you will be at the beginning of the spring? Will you be able to take the journey more commodiously three months hence than now? For my part, I confess were I you that if I could not endure the post-chaise I would take my stick, and follow her on foot. Do you not fear if you let her go alone that your conduct may be badly interpreted ; and that you may be suspected of another motive. I know well that your conscience will justify you, but is that enough, and is it allowable to neglect the opinions of our fellow men?"

When he had read this letter, Rousseau admits that he was thoroughly indignant. Yet even in this mood, his worst suspicion of Diderot was that he had allowed himself to be made the tool of Grimm. He did *not* suspect, what in all probability was the fact, that Diderot

knew perfectly well the inconvenient circumstances; and wished to screen Grimm by putting forward the unsuspicious Jean Jacques. One cannot otherwise discover any reason for Diderot's sudden desire to make Rousseau accompany Madame d'Epinay, leaving Thérèse and the old Madame Levasseur, whom he professed to be so interested in, all alone, "buried" in the forest hermitage.

Instantly Rousseau wrote his reply to Diderot—a reply which is a model of patience and good sense, when the provocation he had received is remembered. "My dear friend," he wrote, "you cannot know either the force of my obligations to Madame d'Epinay, nor to what extent they bind me; nor if she really needs me in this journey; nor if she wishes me to accompany her; nor if it is possible for me to do so; nor the reasons I may have for abstaining from taking this step. I do not refuse to discuss all these points with you, when you have leisure. But, in the meanwhile, admit that to prescribe to me what I ought to do, without having taken any trouble to put yourself in a position to judge, is, my dear Philosopher, a frankly thoughtless way of legislating."

This letter and Diderot's, Rousseau took with him to La Chevrette. He found Grimm with Madame d'Epinay; and he straightway read aloud to them both letters. Grimm's eyes, he said, fell before his; and neither of the two spoke a word.

Let us now see how the story is related in the *Memoirs*.

The cahier 145 has been re-written. Here are the notes, which indicate in what sense the alterations have been made (the references are to cahiers 153 and 154, evidently those that the new cahier 145 replaces; but only some loose sheets of these older cahiers remain).

Arsenal Notes. 0 18, *ref.* 153.[1]

"When René unmasks himself by Garnier's letter found, 'Oh, here then is the explanation of the riddle; it was not only Desbarres, it was René also, who kept him away from me!'

"Re-write the little quarrel with Volx before her departure—let her show herself less childish. Madame de Montbrillant should not know what René's letter contains. Volx should explain in the 154 cahier.

"Volx holds back letters which would have caused her pain, the guardian says this—

"'*Not a word about the letter to Madame de Montbrillant, because Volx has kept it back. No reply from Volx. All this must be replaced.*'

"(Pas un mot sur la lettre à Madame de Montbrillant, parceque Volx la retient. Pas une réponse de lui (Volx) il faut remplacer tout cela.)"

This last note, which as will presently be found is important, is in Diderot's handwriting.

The 145 cahier opens with the guardian's account of Madame de Montbrillant's ill-health, and of the resolution that, after much urging by her mother, her guardian and her devoted Volx, she at last takes, of consulting Tronchin at Geneva. When relating the arrangements she is taking for her journey, there is a note written in the margin of the arsenal cahier, and incorporated in the text of the re-copied manuscript, *but which has been suppressed in the printed Memoirs.* It had better be given in the original French. Madame de Montbrillant writes to her guardian:

"J'ai quelque inquiétude sur l'état de ma femme de chambre. Je trouve depuis quelque temps qu'elle est fort changée. Je crains que la condition que j'ai mise au consentement à son mariage ne l'engage à me cacher

[1] See Appendix, Note D D d.

une grossesse. Je lui en ai parlé. Elle m'assure qu'elle n'est pas grosse. Dans ce cas elle est bien malade ; et dans l'un et l'autre cas, elle peut me causer de grands embarras.

"Je parlai à sa femme de chambre comme elle l'avait desiré" (goes on the serviceable guardian), "cette femme nous trompa, autant pas attachment pour sa maîtresse que pour son intérêt; et m'assura de nouveau qu'elle n'était pas grosse."[1]

"During the last days that Madame de Montbrillant had to pass in the country" (goes on the story), "René appeared to show her extreme regard, and she *was extremely touched by this demonstration of affection.*[2] The eve of the day of her departure, whilst they were alone together, Madame de Montbrillant's letters were brought her. Amongst them was one for René addressed to her care; she gave it him. The reading of this letter threw him into such a rage, that forgetting he was not alone he struck his head with his clenched fists, and began to swear.

"'What is the matter?' she asked him. 'What news have you received which puts you in such a state?'

"'*Mon Dieu!*' he cried, flinging on the ground the letter—*which he had torn with his teeth*—'these men are not friends but tyrants. What an imperious tone this Garnier takes up! I am in no want of their counsel!'

"Madame de Montbrillant picked up the letter.

"'I learn,' wrote Garnier, 'that Madame de Montbrillant is starting for Geneva, and I do not hear that you are going with her. Do you not see that if she has with you all the faults you imagine, here is the golden opportunity to pay her back what you owe her, and then to be able to break with her decently? If you do nothing of the sort, and you let her go alone in the state of health she is in, with her bad disposition towards

[1] Brunet's MS., vol. viii. p. 5.

[2] Omitted in the printed *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 116.

you she will make out of it a charge against you, you will never get free of. You are incessantly repeating that you want to return to your country. What can possibly hold you back, unless there is not one word of truth in all you have told me ?' "

Here, in both manuscripts, the letter ends,—and we have to recognize one of the several grave impositions practised by the editor of the printed *Memoirs*, in altering, *without warning his readers*, the original work. In the published book Garnier's letter, reproduced as Diderot's, is altered, and made to end in the friendly way of the identical letter published by Rousseau in the *Confessions*—that is to say, of the *letter that was actually written by Diderot to Rousseau;* a fact shown by the original autograph, which belongs to the Neuchatel collection of letters. In connection with this letter and the assertion found in the *Memoirs* that René (Rousseau in the printed edition, of course) tore it with his teeth, Professor Ritter, of Geneva, gives this information.[1]

"I testify as an eye-witness that Madame d'Epinay gives us a false story when she paints Rousseau flinging this letter on the floor, after tearing it with his teeth. *When I saw and handled this identical letter in* 1881 *it was not torn.*"

Let us, however, complete the "fable" changed to support the conspirators' legend of the mythical Jean Jacques, whom we find subject to these maniacal fits of frenzy, that no reliable witness ever records of Rousseau.

Madame de Montbrillant, having read the letter, asks :—

" ' What is this supposition ? Why does M. Garnier think I am ill-disposed towards you ? What faults, pray, have I with you ?'

"René woke up as from a dream : and remained confused at the imprudence his anger had made him

[1] *Lettres Inédites de J. J. Rousseau.*

commit. He tore the letter from Madame de Montbrillant's hand and stammered hurriedly—

"'Oh, nothing in reality; my old uneasiness about . . . . but you assured me my suspicions were without foundation; I think no more about them. Would it really give you pleasure if I went with you to Geneva? . . . .'

"'And so,' said Madame de Montbrillant, 'you actually permitted yourself to accuse me to M. Garnier?'

"'I confess it,' he replied, 'and I beg your pardon. He came to see me at that time. My heart was heavy, and I could not resist the temptation of telling him my trouble. How can one be reserved with those one loves?'

"'You think it costs less, sir, to suspect a friend, and to accuse her without proof or reason?'

"'Had I been sure, madame, that you were guilty, I should have said nothing. I should have felt too humiliated—too wretched.'

"'Is that the reason, sir, which has prevented you from justifying me in M. Garnier's eyes?'

"'No doubt it is—you were not guilty, and I have no occasion to speak again of what had passed from my mind.'

"Madame de Montbrillant, very indignant, wished to drive him from her room. He fell on his knees before her and begged her forgiveness, assuring her he would at once write to Garnier and justify her.

"'Do as you please, sir,' she said; 'nothing you can do henceforth will affect me—you were not contented with having done me a cruel injustice. You vowed to me that your life's devotion would not be enough to repair it, and at the same time, you painted me in your friend's eyes as an abominable creature; you allowed him to keep this opinion; and you imagine that all is made right when you tell him to-day you were mistaken.'

"'I know Garnier,' he replied, 'and the strength of his first impressions. I waited for some proofs to justify you.'

"'Sir,' she said, 'leave me; your presence is painful to me. I am glad I am going away—for I could not endure seeing you again. You may say to any one who questions you that I did not wish you to accompany me, because it could not be helpful to either of us to travel together in view of your state of health and of my own. And now go—and let me never see you again.'

"He left her, furious; Madame de Montbrillant sent for me, and for M. Volx, who was walking with me; and we found her absolutely exhausted by the impression this man's falseness had made upon her. . ."

The following day this abominable René re-appears just as Madame de Montbrillant is getting into the carriage that is to take her to Paris, where she is to spend some days before starting for Geneva. René gives his outraged benefactress a letter which he begs her to send Garnier, and which contains her justification. He then has the abjectness to beg her to allow him to remain at the Hermitage until the spring. She answers, "You are at liberty to remain there, sir, as long as you find yourself comfortable;" and with that she leaves him. The letter is sent to Garnier, and the following day Garnier shows it to Volx. Here is the letter that René is supposed to have written:—

"What on earth possesses you that you will send the letters you write to me to Madame de Montbrillant? I have told you twenty times that all that pass through her hands are opened. This one has been, as others have been before; and has caused me abominable trouble. There have been explanations and I have had to endure false reproaches—this woman has the craze of standing well with you; she will never forgive me for having told you the truth. You may say what you please: she and I are quits—I feel in no way obliged to follow her; it's not possible for me to do it; and I assure you she doesn't want it."

Volx says nothing of this detestable letter to Madame

de Montbrillant;[1] but before the lady starts on her journey he detects her writing letters that are intended to serve René, should he leave the Hermitage. Volx now becomes severe; and exacts the promise that Madame de Montbrillant will do nothing about René without consulting him. And the lady leaves for Geneva —René's letter (the one written by Rousseau on the 29th October) having arrived after she left: and the letter that was a "prodigy of ingratitude" to Grimm having been received by him on the day she started.

Now that the events happened as the author of the *Confessions*, and not as the author of the *Memoirs*, described, is proved by a phrase in Diderot's reply to Rousseau, which has been re-produced from the autograph.

"I wrote to you," thus runs Diderot's letter, "as a prudent man, a letter that was only intended for you: and you communicate it to Madame d'Epinay and to Grimm; and the results have been confusions and questionings and half truths equivalent to small lies, etc."

The story then of Madame d'Epinay's indignation at the letter she picks up and reads; of Rousseau's protestations, of his false letter to Diderot, has no shred of truth in it.

It stands proved, also, by a letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Houdetot, that Jean Jacques bade Madame d'Epinay a friendly, but somewhat cold good-bye; and that on the same day that his hostess left La Chevrette he called upon Madame d'Houdetot at Eaubonne, taking with him the affectionate letter he had just received from Saint-Lambert; which he says entirely established him in the wise resolutions of henceforth seeing nothing but a friend in Madame d'Houdetot. It was on the occasion of this visit that Madame d'Houdetot, who evidently was alarmed by a phrase in Diderot's letter,

[1] See note: "Volx holds back letters which would have caused her pain."—Appendix, Note D D d.

which she took to mean that Jean Jacques' refusal to quit the Hermitage might be used to re-awaken the now quieted suspicions of Saint-Lambert, required of Rousseau that he should commit the serious blunder of submitting his reasons to (of all persons) Grimm! Here, again, the affirmation of the author of the *Confessions* is corroborated by the evidence of an autograph letter, that is in the Neuchatel collection, written by Madame d'Houdetot. This letter is dated 1st November, 1757.

"My friend," wrote this lady, for whom there was no to-morrow, "*count for ever upon me;* and since my friendship is dear to you, believe that I am no more capable of being false to it than to love. I have already told you this: *and all my life shall prove it. Believe also that my sentiments are entirely independent of those of your other friends, should these be ever false to you.* I can always reply for two hearts,[1] that remain attached to you by all that in you is tender and virtuous. A friend such as you are, will always add to the esteem we have for each other and to our happiness. Madame d'Epinay has left, my dear citizen: you have now only to tranquillize yourself about the step you have taken. I was very persuaded by the force of the reasons you had for not following her; but I desired that your friends should be as convinced as I was, because I find it hard that our friends should believe we are in fault. Never mind what is thought—one can console one's self if one has done no wrong: the only grief one can't escape from is self-reproach. But I must take your friend's[2] part also, my dear citizen, with a sincerity worthy of us both and of our friendship. I believe you misjudged the motive which led him to press you to follow Madame d'Epinay. It is quite easy to understand that your friend feared to see you incur the reproach of having failed at a critical moment to render essential service to a friend: if he deceived himself on the point of what he regarded as an obligation for you, his zeal was not less a

[1] Saint-Lambert's and her own. [2] Diderot's.

proof of his affection. What would have been well, would have been to peaceably explain your reasons to him[1] with as much quietness as he had shown vivacity; your reasons were a sufficient reply, inasmuch as they were good ones: and in a few minutes you would have brought your friends to approve of them and to render you the justice you deserve. *This is the object you fulfilled in what I advised you to write to M. Grimm.* Perhaps you put too much anger in your reply? Do not believe, my friend, that any one wished to exercise a tyrannical empire over you. Be free, you are made to be so: but you are made also to excuse and even to be grateful for the free counsels of friendship, where the chief grief would be to find you in fault. It suffices to show that you are not capable of committing one; and you satisfy your own self-respect without sinning against friendship."[2]

Thus, pleased with her own wisdom, discourses this light-hearted lady, who never knows where she is, nor what she is doing. In the present instance, a very little attention to facts of her own experience might have taught her the mischief she was working. Rousseau's first reply to Diderot had been absolutely faultless both in tone and matter. His conduct in reading both letters to Madame d'Epinay and Grimm had left him master of the situation. His assertion that he had reasons *that he did not refuse to explain if he were asked for them*, left with the persons who provoked the explanation all the blame for any revelations that they might not be pleased to hear. The absolutely unnecessary measure of making Grimm the umpire in a discussion that was virtually settled until this step re-opened it, was the first blunder. The second blunder was to put Rousseau in a position where he had either to betray secrets injurious to Madame d'Epinay, without any motive that sufficiently excused such an action, or else to give

[1] Precisely what Rousseau offered to do.

[2] See Streckeisen-Moultou, vol. i. pp. 369–370.

reasons that were not the real ones, and that people unacquainted with the true circumstances would esteem ungenerous.

In this plight Rousseau chose the second course, which was the unselfish but not the politic one. He made it his task to disprove Diderot's assertions that he was under a debt of gratitude to Madame d'Epinay which compelled him to sacrifice his health, his tastes, his resources, and even his good name and the welfare of those really dependent upon him, the moment that she required companionship and entertainment. Even from this point of view, the advantages were with him, could he have excluded from his recollection the stronger arguments he was not at liberty to use. But here the man's sincerity, and the writer's eloquence, both betrayed him. As he thought of these things, pen in hand, his heart grew hot within him. How this gift of the Hermitage he had accepted and valued solely as a proof of affection, had been transformed into a binding and burthensome obligation! First of all, compelling him to silence before such flagrant outrages as the violation of his private correspondence and the endeavour to bribe, to betray him, the woman who shared his life; then, dragging him through the humiliation of the sham reconciliation with Grimm; and now, seeking to impose upon him a task which would expose him to ridicule and disgrace! And as he thought of it all, the fire kindled; and, before it, his tottering friendship for Madame d'Epinay crumbled down into ashes! He made no charge against her, even now —but the extinction of all warmth of kindnesses in his tone, when summing up her kindnesses to him and weighing them against their cost to him, renders his letter harsh and displeasing to an uninitiated reader, ignorant of the sense of burning wrong beneath this cold repudiation of a claim to gratitude.

So, that this letter was not a prodigy of ingratitude; but, given to Grimm to circulate freely in public, with his own comments upon it, it was a prodigy of imprudence.

Another grave defect of this letter is that it is quite four times too long. But there is no help for it. By people who honestly desire to arrive at a clear knowledge of Rousseau's condition of mind towards Madame d'Epinay, and of his honourable observance (towards one whom he had ceased to love and esteem) of the duties of his extinct friendship, this letter must be read through carefully; and the fact realized that such care is taken to avoid one word of accusation, that the whole blame, as a matter of fact, returns upon the writer; who justifies himself from the charge of ingratitude, perhaps, but appears to every uninstructed reader convicted of ungraciousness and deficient amiability.

"*October* 19, 1757.

"Tell me, my dear Grimm, why all my friends assume that I ought to accompany Madame d'Epinay to Geneva? Am I wrong? Or are they all misled? Have they all been seized by this base partiality always ready to decide in favour of the rich, and to burthen the poor with a hundred duties which render their state the harder? I will only refer the question to you. Although you are no doubt prejudiced in the same way as the others, I believe you are just enough to put yourself in my place, and to judge me by my true duties. Listen, then, to my reasons, my friend, and decide for me what part I should take; for whatever you decide, I declare I will do at once.

"What is there that compels me to follow Madame d'Epinay?—Friendship—gratitude—the use I can be to her? Let us examine all these points. If Madame d'Epinay has shown me friendship, I have shown her even more. The attentions have been mutual; or, to say the least, as assiduous on my side as on hers. We are both ill, and I do not owe her more consideration here than she owes me, unless the greater sufferer of the two is to be held bound to look after the other. Upon this subject I have only one word to say. She has

friends less ill, less poor, less jealous of their liberty, and who are, to say the least of it, as dear to her as I am; but I do not see that any one amongst them recognizes it as a duty to follow her. By what extraordinary accident does this duty devolve on me then, who am the least able to fulfil it? If Madame d'Epinay be so dear to me that I should renounce everything to amuse her, how is it I am so little dear to her, that she is willing to buy, at the cost of my health, my life, my peace, my time, and all my resources, a companion whose care of her is so awkward as mine would prove? I don't know whether I should offer to follow her; but I know that, unless she have the hard heart opulence gives, *but which has always seemed to me remote from her*, she ought not to accept such an offer if I made it.

"As for benefits, first of all I do not like them, I do not want them, and I am not grateful for those forced upon me. I have explained that very clearly to Madame d'Epinay before accepting anything at her hands. It is not that I do not love as well as any one else to yield myself up to those sweet ties which friendship binds; but when the chain is too tightly drawn, it breaks and leaves me free. What has Madame d'Epinay done for me? You know as well as any one, and I can speak freely with you. She has built for me a little house at the Hermitage and has begged me to live in it; I add with pleasure that she has taken the trouble to make my residence there agreeable and safe. What have I done for Madame d'Epinay? At a time when I was ready to return to my own country, when I meant and desired to do it, and should have done it, she moved heaven and earth to keep me. By force of her solicitations, and intrigues even, she succeeded, and she conquered my long resistance, my wishes, my tastes, the disapproval of my friends. Everything my heart gave up to her ascendancy. I let myself be led to the Hermitage; and ever since I have always felt I was in some one else's hands; and this moment of weakness has caused

me a long repentance. My dear friends, attentive to the task of constantly distressing me, have taken care not to leave me the peace I hoped to find there. Madame d'Epinay, often alone in the country, wished that I should keep her company. After having made one sacrifice to friendship, I had to make another to gratitude. One needs to be poor, without a valet, to hate formalities, and to have a soul like mine, to feel what it is to live in another person's house! I have, nevertheless, lived two years in hers, always hampered by subjection amongst fine discourses about liberty, waited on by twenty servants, and cleaning my own boots every morning; afflicted by sad indigestions and sighing for homely fare. You know that it is impossible for me to work otherwise than in my retreat alone, at my ease, in the woods, without distractions or subjection. But I won't speak about my time lost. That might be got over by my being destitute and naked until the loss is made up. But try to reckon how many crowns could pay for an hour of life and liberty—compare Madame d'Epinay's benefits with my sacrifices, and tell me, between us, which owes the other most?

"I pass on to the question of utility. Madame d'Epinay goes in a good post-chaise, accompanied by her husband, her son's tutor, her lady's-maid, and five or six servants. She goes to Geneva, a town largely populated, full of society, where she will only have to choose her circle. She goes to M. Tronchin, her doctor, her friend, a man of talent, highly considered, sought after, surrounded by the best people, and by a family full of merit—and where she will find every resource, for her health, for friendship and for amusement. Consider now my state, my sufferings, my disposition, and my means, and tell me, I beg you, of what use should I be to Madame d'Epinay on this journey? Could I endure a post-chaise? Could I expect to finish the journey at this season of the year without an accident? Am I to stop the carriage when my state is unendurable? Or

am I to endure, suffer, and die? Let Diderot treat my state of health, my life, as lightly as he pleases. My condition is known, and the surgeons who have attended me can testify to it. I assure you that, suffering as I do, I am not less weary than others are of seeing my life prolonged. Madame d'Epinay would then have to expect continual annoyance, and possibly some accident by the way. She knows me too well to ignore that in such a case I would rather go away and expire under a hedge than cause expense to others, or the trouble of nursing me. And on my side, *I know her kind heart too well to ignore how painful it would be to her to leave me in such a state and continue her journey.*

"I might, it is true, follow the carriage on foot, as M. Diderot suggests! But the wind might impede my progress, and snow and rain stop it. And then, let me run as fast as I may, can I do thirty leagues a day? And if I let the chaise keep ahead of me, of what use shall I be to the person inside it? Arrived at Geneva, I should have to pass my days shut up with Madame d'Epinay; and whatever efforts I might make to amuse her, it is impossible that a life so constrained and contrary to my taste should not plunge me into a black melancholy I could not master. When we are alone and happy, Madame d'Epinay does not speak to me, nor I to her. What would it be when I was sad and awkward? If she falls from the clouds in Geneva, so much the more should I; for with money one always has friends, but the poor man has no home in strange parts. The acquaintances I have would not suit her; and those she will make, most certainly won't suit me any better. I shall have duties to fulfil, which will take me away from her; or else no one will know what are the reasons that make me neglect these duties, and keep me in her house. Were I better dressed, perhaps I might pass for her confidential servant. What, sir, an unlucky man, borne down with sufferings, who has scarcely a pair of shoes to his feet, who has neither

clothes, money, nor other resources, who only asks one thing of his friends—to leave him, wretched as he is, at least his freedom, is necessary to Madame d'Epinay, who travels surrounded by all the luxuries of life, and who is attended to by ten persons? Oh, Fortune, if in thy bosom people cannot do without a poor man such as I, I am at least happier than those who possess thee, for I can do without them! Ah, but you will say—the reason is, that she loves you: she cannot do without her friend. *But, my dear Grimm, it seems she will have to do without you, to whom most certainly I am not preferred.* Oh, how well I know all the meanings given to this word friendship! Often it is used as another name for servitude. I should always love to serve my friend if he be as poor as I am. If he be richer, let us remain free—or let him serve me; for as he has his bread without earning it, he has more time to give to his pleasures.

"There remain a few words to say about myself. If there are duties calling me to attend upon Madame d'Epinay, are there not others that keep me here—or do I owe nothing to any one but her? I should not have travelled six leagues, before Diderot, who finds it wrong I should stay, would find it even more wrong in me to have gone; and in this there would be some truth. 'Ah,' he would cry, 'you follow a wealthy woman, accompanied by friends, to whom you owe nothing, and who does not want you, to leave in poverty and loneliness persons who have passed their life in your service; and whom your departure leaves in despair!' If I allow my expenses to be paid, Diderot would make this a fresh obligation. If ever in the future I claimed the right to do as I please, he would say: 'See this ungrateful fellow! She took him to his country: and now he leaves her!' If I pay my share of the cost, as assuredly I should do, where could I find so suddenly enough money? To whom am I to sell my books and furniture, and all I have, in order to raise it? I won't ask what is

to become of me afterwards, the journey over and done; it is clear that, only able to live by a quiet and slow occupation, and having no time of my own, I must die of hunger. Whilst I am away, I shall have a small household here, which will be without means during my absence. I shall be kept by Madame d'Epinay. But what does this mean? to stay in another person's house when one has no servant of one's own, and no authority over other people's servants? *It means spending a great deal more than one does at home, to be uncomfortable all day long; to get nothing one wants; to do nothing one likes; to be enslaved by a hundred chains and to find one's self at the end under obligations to the same people for whose sake one has been nearly ruined.* Add to all this my case, of an idle sick man, accustomed to leave things about and to lose nothing; to ask for nothing and to have his wants supplied; to feel always near one, some one who guesses and does what one requires. In other people's houses the masters, well served themselves, imagine that their guests are as well looked after. Visitors, who have their own servants, can secure this; but a man of my sort, whose fortune, attire and silence invite neglect, can only get served at the price of gold: he dare not be his own valet; and he dare not claim the service of other people's.

"I see well whence come all the griefs I suffer from. It is because I am in a society outside of my own state; and because all the people with whom I live, judging me always by their way of life and never by my own, expect a man who has nothing, to act in the same way as one who has ten thousand pounds a year. No one puts himself in my place: no one recognizes that I am a being apart; that I have not the character, the principles, nor the means they have, and that I am not to be measured by their rules. If people consider my poverty, it is merely to render it insupportable. It is thus that the philosopher Diderot in his study, at the corner of a good fire, in a well wadded dressing-gown,

wishes me to do thirty leagues on foot in winter, to run after a post-chaise, because, after all, to run and to get bespattered with mud is the trade of a poor man! However this may be, you may be quite sure that the philosopher Diderot, if he could not endure a post-chaise, would never in his life run after the carriage of any one! Nevertheless there would be this difference—that he would have good shoes, good stockings, warm under-clothing; that he would have supped well over-night; have started thoroughly warmed: all things that make it easier for a man to run, than it is for one who has not money to pay at his inn for the supper, the fire, and the warm clothing. On my faith: if philosophy do not teach people to make these distinctions, what is it good for?

"Weigh my reasons then, my dear friend, and then tell me what I should do? I am ready to do my duty; but in my state in very truth no more than that can be asked from me. If you decide that I should go, tell Madame d'Epinay; send me an express, and, without further delay, I will start for Paris on receiving your reply.

"As for the residence at the Hermitage, I feel strongly that I should not remain there, for even whilst continuing to pay the gardener's wages it is not a sufficient rent; but I feel I owe it to Madame d'Epinay not to leave the Hermitage under circumstances that might give the impression that there was dissatisfaction or any quarrel between us.

"I confess, too, that it would be hard for me to undertake a removal at this season, when the approach of winter makes itself felt; it will be better to wait for the spring, when my departure will seem more natural."

In connection with Rousseau's affirmation that if, after weighing his reasons, Grimm still decided he ought to go, he would abide by this decision, the author of the *Confessions* explains that he meant this; he had heard that an alteration in the original plan had been made as

a result of his refusal. M. d'Epinay, always amiable, had been persuaded to go with his wife. "In these circumstances," wrote Rousseau, "my journey would have worn a different air; whereas in the first instance I was the person they wished to employ: and the question of obtaining M. d'Epinay was only thought of after my refusal."

Rousseau's letter to Grimm was sent on the day after the interview with Madame d'Houdetot; that is to say, on the 26th October. Grimm's first answer came two days later. It is given in the *Confessions*—the Streckeisen-Moultou re-productions prove that this version is genuine.

"Madame d'Epinay's departure is delayed," wrote Grimm: "her son is ill: and she has to wait until he has recovered. I will dream over your letter—keep quiet in your Hermitage. I will send you my answer in due time. As she certainly will not start for a few days, there is no immediate hurry. In the meanwhile, if you think it well to do so, you might make your offer to her; although it seems to me of no great importance, because as she knows your position as well as you do, I do not doubt she will reply in the way she should: and all that will be gained will be that you can say to people who comment upon the fact that you did not go with her, that at least you offered to go. Besides, I don't know why you take it for granted that the philosopher is the mouthpiece of every one; and because his opinion is that you should go, why you should imagine that all your friends are of the same way of thinking? If you write to Madame d'Epinay, her reply may give you your answer to all these friends; as you have it so much at heart to answer them. Farewell. I salute Madame Levasseur and the Criminal."[1]

This first reply of Grimm's is probably the letter alluded to in Diderot's note—"*pas de lettre de Volx*—

[1] Rousseau explains that *le criminel* was one of Grimm's playful terms for Thérèse.

il faut remplacer tout cela." For one finds in the re-copied Arsenal Cahier 147, and in Brunet's manuscript, no mention of this letter; and in order to explain how Rousseau came to know of the delay in Madame d'Epinay's departure through her son's indisposition, a phrase is inserted in his letter of the 29th October, to Madame d'Epinay, making him assert that Madame d'Houdetot has told him about it.

One can easily understand that the revisers of the story found this first letter inconveniently destructive of the effect it was desired should be produced by Grimm's second answer to Rousseau's "horrible apology," received by Jean Jacques only on the 8th November—that is to say, when time had been given Madame d'Epinay to reach Geneva.

Here is Rousseau's description of this second letter, which he, imprudently, sent back to the sender without taking a copy of it:—

"It was only seven or eight lines long, but I didn't take the trouble to finish it. It was a rupture, but written in terms that only the most infernal hatred could have dictated, and that became positively stupid in the effort to be as offensive as possible. He forbade me his presence, as though he forbade me his kingdom. The only thing that could prevent one from laughing at the absurdity of the letter was lack of *sangfroid* when reading it. Without copying it, or even reading it to the end, I sent it him back immediately with these words—

"I refused to listen to my just suspicions. Too late, I at last know you! This is then the letter that you required to meditate over at your leisure? I send it you back—it is not for me. You are free to show mine to the whole earth: and to hate me openly; it will be in you one falsity the less."

The *Memoirs* give this letter from René: but the letter from the virtuously indignant Volx which provoked it, is much longer than seven or eight lines, and

does not correspond with Rousseau's description. But it is a rupture dictated by the just hatred of the righteous Volx for the monster René, and it has, amongst other vigorous sentences, this phrase—"If I could forgive you I should consider myself unworthy to possess a friend. I will never see you again in my life, and I shall esteem myself happy if I can banish all recollection of your proceedings from my mind. I beg you to forget me; and not to trouble my soul again. If the justice of this request does not touch you; recollect that I have your letter in my hands, which will justify my conduct in the eyes of all right-thinking people."

Mr. John Morley describes this second answer to Rousseau's letter by Grimm, as "a flash of manly anger, very welcome to us." But it has to be recollected that the "flash" took twelve days of "dreaming" over the matter to be produced. And then again, if this letter of the 8th November exhibits Grimm's "manly anger" at Rousseau's letter, received on the 27th or 28th of October, how are we to explain the hypocritical con descension of Grimm's first answer of the 28th October: with its dubious suggestion that Rousseau might offer Madame d'Epinay to accompany her, counting upon her refusal of the offer, as a sufficient answer to people who considered that he ought to have escorted her to his native city?

"I wrote to Madame d'Epinay," says the author of the *Confessions*, "about the illness of her son, with all the politeness possible in the circumstances; *but I did not fall into the trap prepared for me by offering to accompany her?*"

Was this perhaps the cause of Grimm's tardy explosion of "manly anger"?

Rousseau's letter to Madame d'Epinay was dated 29th October: that is to say, was written immediately after the receipt of Grimm's first answer: and two days before Madame d'Epinay quitted Paris. The Arsenal note

suggesting that Volx is to be made to hold back letters likely to distress the lady on the eve of her journey is evidently intended to justify Madame d'Epinay's assertion, when, writing from Geneva to Rousseau on 12th November, she affirms that she only received his letter of the 29th October on the 9th of November, upon reaching Geneva. There can be little doubt that the "little scene" between Volx and Madame de Montbrillant, on the night before their separation, which the Notes order to be re-written: and where the heroine is to be "less childish,"[1] has reference to Madame d'Epinay's desire to answer this letter, and to Grimm's objections. The tyrannical lover, of course, has his way against Madame d'Epinay's vain endeavours to resist the rôle imposed upon her towards the favourite old friend, for whom (we have the testimony of her own son to prove it) she always kept a regretful tenderness. Here is a passage from a letter written by Volx to the heroine, that we may very confidently, I think, suppose a faithful extract from a letter of Grimm's in this epoch to Madame d'Epinay.

"What would flatter me most from you would be the boundless confidence that I try to deserve. In short, I would wish that there were no difference between you and me; that your most intimate thoughts were as well known to me as to yourself; that this confidence extended to what concerns me as well as to what regards you. If I had a moment of anxiety on the eve of our separation, have not events proved it was well founded? It was not your heart I suspected: these words: '*you know what prevented me*,' by which you justified the mysteries which I reproached you with—were they not bound to make me believe that Rousseau had again dared to speak of me in a way you should not have tolerated, and that your true heart would not have hidden, but that your weakness would not let you tell me with the frankness natural to you? *Had I not*

[1] See Note, Arsenal. "Refaire la petite querelle le jour de son départ; qu'elle y fait moins l'enfant."

everything to fear for you, as a result of your desire to serve him, which would have been a weapon in his hands against you? Here, my tender friend, is what touches my heart, that can no longer be happy save through you. I have never loved you more tenderly than when I have seen you confide to me with confusion your mistakes: these moments are the finest triumph of virtue, they have rendered you more precious to my heart than your beauty, or your favours to me."

Virtue, manifested in Madame d'Epinay's renunciation of her own wish to serve Rousseau, and adoption of Grimm's will that he shall be turned out of his Hermitage in mid-winter with insults and reviling, triumphs, as it was bound to do, when the poor lady's situation is considered. With the docility that this amiable lover appreciates more highly than either her charms or her favours, she writes, "for the first time in her life," as Rousseau says, a contemptuous and an offensive letter to him: which he receives eight days after his rupture with Grimm. He answers it on the 23rd November:—

"If one could die of grief, I should not be alive. But at length I have made up my mind. Friendship is extinguished between us, madame; but what once existed still retains claims over me that I can respect. I have not forgotten your kindnesses, and you can count upon all the gratitude that one can feel for one whom it is no longer permitted one to love. All further explanation would be useless—I have for me my conscience: and I can only bid you consult your own.

"I wished to leave the Hermitage: and I should have done so. But I am told I ought to stay until the spring; and as my friends wish it, I will remain until the spring if you consent to it."

We have not spent so much time with Madame d'Epinay to think that she would, of her own accord, have driven this sick man out of his little cottage in December! But Grimm's letters are urgent.

"Your reply to his letter is well enough: but

Rousseau seems in no hurry to leave your house; for my part I believe that after all that has passed you cannot leave him in it without loss of self-respect."

And, on the 10th December, Rousseau receives his dismissal: Madame d'Epinay's letter is dated 1st December.

"After having given you for several years every possible proof of friendship and interest, I can now only pity you. You are very unhappy. I hope your conscience is as tranquil as mine is. This may be necessary to your repose through life. Since you wished to quit the Hermitage, and since you ought to have done so, I am astonished that your friends should have kept you there. For my part I do not consult them about my duties, and I have nothing more to say about yours."

In this sudden emergency the little house of Mont Louis was offered to Rousseau by the agent of the Prince de Condé—in eight days his removal was effected, and he wrote to Madame d'Epinay :—

"17th *December.*

"Nothing is more simple or more necessary, madame, than that I should quit your house directly you disapprove of my remaining there. Upon your refusal to consent to my passing the remainder of the winter there, I quitted it on the 15th December. My fate was to enter it against my will and to leave it in the same way. I thank you for the residence you persuaded me to make there: and I should thank you more had it cost me less. For the rest, you are quite right to call me unhappy; no one knows better than yourself how unhappy I am. If it is a misfortune to deceive one's self when choosing a friend, it is a greater misfortune still to discover one's error."

There is a postscript to this letter which the author of the *Confessions* omits—"Your gardener is paid."

On the 17th January Madame d'Epinay replies to this postscript: and here we find her departing from the

"boundless confidence" demanded of her as her rule of life—for, if the *Memoirs* are to be trusted, she especially assured her Tyrant that she had not answered Rousseau's letter :—

"I only received your letter of the 17th December, sir, yesterday : it was sent with a chest full of different things which has been all this time on the way. As for the letter, I don't understand it ; and if we were in a position to have an explanation, I should feel disposed to attribute all that has passed to a misunderstanding. I will only reply to the postscript. You may remember, sir, that we agreed that the wages of the gardener of the Hermitage should pass through your hands, in order that he should better understand that he depended upon you, and to avoid all risk of the ridiculous and improper behaviour of his predecessor. The proof of this is that the first quarter of his wages were given you : and that I had agreed with you some days before my departure to have you repaid the advances you had made for me. I know that you made some difficulty : but I had asked you to make these advances for me ; it was surely a simple matter I should repay them, and we came to agree on this point. Cahouet tells me, however, you refuse to take this money. There must surely be some misunderstanding. I am giving him orders to return it to you, and I do not see why you should pay my gardener in spite of our agreement, and even beyond the term of your occupation of the Hermitage. I am taking it for granted, sir, that remembering all I have the honour of recalling to you, you will not refuse re-payment of the advances you were good enough to make for me."

Rousseau has been blamed for saying that the correspondence stopped here—inasmuch as he answered this letter. His reason is, nevertheless, a simple matter of delicacy : he declined to be repaid for the wages he had given the gardener, and did not wish this part of the discussion made public. Here is the last letter

which Rousseau wrote, and which the editors of the printed *Memoirs* correct in the MS. from the original letter :—

"I see, madame, that my letters have always the ill luck to reach you late. What is certain is that yours of the 17th January was not given me until the 17th of this month by M. Cahouet—apparently your correspondent had kept it all this time. I will not attempt to explain what you are determined not to understand : I can only admire that with so much cleverness should be united such dulness of intellect ; but after all, I ought not to be astonished, for you have long boasted to me about this defect. My intention never having been to take re-payment for the wages of your gardener, there is not much likelihood that I shall change my mind now. The consent you speak of was the sort of consent one gives vaguely to end a discussion, or to put it off, and that signifies a refusal. It is true that you sent me in the month of September 1756, by your coachman, the wages of the preceding gardener, and that I settled his account. It is also true that I have always paid his successor with my own money. As for the first quarter of his wages, which you say were sent me, it seems to me, madame, you should know the contrary. What is very certain in any case is that it was not even offered me. As for the fifteen days which remained to the end of the year when I left the Hermitage, you will agree it wasn't worth while to deduct them. Heaven knows I do not pretend to have paid for my residence at the Hermitage. My heart cannot put at such a low price the services of friendship ; but with the tax you have put on them, never was the rent of any house so dear. I learn the strange discourses your correspondents in Paris indulge in at my expense—and I judge by these of those you, with more consideration, perhaps, keep afloat at Geneva. There is then great pleasure in hurting others : and in hurting those one had for friends ? For my part it is a pleasure I have no taste for : and would not seek even in self-

defence. Do and say what pleases you : I have no other reply to oppose to you but silence, patience, and an upright life. For the rest, if you have any fresh torments in store for me, make haste, for I feel that you may not have this pleasure long."

Here then, on the 17th of February 1758, Rousseau's last word is said to Madame d'Epinay ; and during the remaining twenty years of his life he regarded her as one of his secretly active enemies. Yet neither in the *Confessions* nor in the *Dialogues* nor in any letter of confidential communication, did he reveal what he knew of her past life, and misadventures with M. de Francueil and with Grimm ; and in relating, as he was bound to do, the causes of their quarrel, he dwells with so much pleasure on her past kindnesses, and spends so little trouble in proving her to blame, that every reader of the *Confessions* comes away with the impression that Rousseau ought not to have suspected of unkindness the amiable lady who built him his Hermitage.

Summing up the position we find that Rousseau committed no crimes against Madame d'Epinay.

He did not accuse her of writing an anonymous letter : he charged her with faults which she had committed through jealousy of himself and Madame d'Houdetot. He very wisely and rightly resisted the effort made by Diderot to impose upon him the obligation of accompanying her to Geneva.

He did not write to Grimm a letter that was a prodigy of ingratitude—but, urged by Madame d'Houdetot to choose Grimm for umpire, he wrote an imprudent letter, where Madame d'Epinay appeared blameless, and he himself at fault.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

NOTE A

INTERPRETATIONS OF ROUSSEAU'S BOOKS AND INFLUENCES

"These interpretations of Rousseau's books leave his teachings in a 'cloud of black incomprehensibleness,'" see p. 4.

Thus, let us take the interpretation of the *Contrat Social* delivered to English readers in the criticism of that work by Mr. John Morley:—

Readers of this criticism are told that "the author of the *Social Contract* involuntarily, and unconsciously, helped the growth of progressive ideas, in which he had no faith" (vol. ii. p. 195). They are told that the *Social Contract* was "the match which kindled revolutionary fire in generous breasts throughout Europe" (ii. pp. 192, 193); that it evoked "virile and patriotic energy," that "its phrases became the language of all who aspired after freedom" (ii. p. 192); that it produced "an enthusiastic faith in the renovation of society."

But they are also told of the same book (ii. p. 120) that it represented the "formal denial of the possibility of overcoming the difficulties in the way of reforming society"—that, for the author, the "dream of human perfectibility was a sour and fantastic mockery;" (ii. p. 119)—that his depressing faith was "that the golden era has passed away from our globe" (ii. p. 119); that the "utmost men could do was to turn their eyes to the past, and to try to walk for a space in the track of the ancient societies: they would hardly succeed; but endeavour might at least do something to stay the plague of universal degeneracy."

About the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, readers of Mr. Morley's psychological criticism are told:—that the effect of this extraordinary popular novel was "to fascinate the public with the charm of a serene, well-ordered, cheerful home" (ii. p. 47); "to restore marriage to a rank amongst high and honourable obligations, and to represent it as the best support of an equable life of right conduct and harmonious emotion"; to "teach men some respect for the dignity of woman; and women a firmer respect for themselves" (ii. p. 31). Above all, "by the example of Julie's energetic return to duty, to teach the possibility and the satisfaction of bending character back to comeliness and honour" (ii. p. 30). But about the same book they are also told:—that "the influences of the work were mischievous," inasmuch as its tendency was "to divorce emotion (ii. p. 55) from disciplined intelligence, and to recommend irrational retrogression from active use of the understanding back to dreamy contemplation."

About *Emile*, readers of this criticism are told:—that the work "stands out as one of the seminal works in the history of literature" (ii. p. 249); that it was "the charter of youthful deliverance, that cleared away the clogging prejudices and inveterate usages that made education one of the dark arts"; that it was "recognized by Herder, by Lavater and by Jean Paul Richter as the most excellent of all treatises upon education" (ii. pp. 250, 251, 252, 253); that it is the one "from which the most systematic, popular, and permanently successful of all educational reformers (Pestalozzi) borrowed his spirit and principles" (ii. p. 252).

But these readers are also told:—that *Emile* "perhaps is the most imperfect treatise ever written on this world-interesting subject"; that "it is fatally tarnished with the cold, damp breath of isolation and, at bottom, the apotheosis of social despair" (ii. p. 236).

So much for the interpretation of Rousseau's books. When appreciating the three chief articles of faith

proclaimed in the social "gospel according to Jean Jacques," this critic says—of the first doctrine, the *sovereignty of peoples*—that we have to recognize as (ii. p. 194) "a rapid deduction from it, the great truth that a nation, with a civilized polity, does not consist of an order, or a caste, but of the great body of its members; the army of toilers, who make the most painful of the sacrifices needed for the continual nutrition of the social organism; and that hence, all political institutions should have for their aim, the physical, intellectual and moral amelioration of the poorest and most numerous class."

From the second doctrine, of the *Social Compact*, that is to say, of "society founded, not upon a covenant of subjection, but upon a covenant of social brotherhood," the reader is told that he must trace "the starting-point in the history of the ideas of the Revolution of the most prominent of them all (ii. p. 160), that of Fraternity"; and, further, "gradually following from the important place given by Rousseau to the idea of equal association (ii. p. 195) as at once the foundation and the enduring bond of a community, later schemes of mutualism, and all the other shapes of collective action for a common social good."

Finally, from the doctrine of rights (vol. i. p. 183), signifying "not absolute equality, in the sense that all men are equal in capacity, or that degrees of wealth and power should be actually the same, but the moral claim of all men to equal opportunities," the starting-point "of movements that have had all the fervour and intensity of religion, to correct violent political and social inequalities amongst different members of a community," movements "inspired by Rousseau's principle that because the force of things is constantly tending to destroy equality, the force of legislation should constantly tend to uphold it" (i. p. 184).

Nevertheless, readers of this criticism are told that these doctrines of Rousseau's social gospel have "given no help towards the solution of any of the problems of government;

and that they are "scientifically valueless and practically mischievous ideas, because they express an effort to base political institutions upon figments" (vol. ii. p. 186).

It will be admitted that these interpretations of Rousseau's books and influences supply no clear conceptions, or definite conclusions, upon which an intelligent judgment of what he really taught, or of our true spiritual obligations to him, can be founded. In other words, the failure of this psychological criticism to explain Rousseau to us, by the method of judging him as a man "in whose soul one must always see two things at the same time," renders a new criticism necessary.

NOTE AA

TESTIMONY OF IMPARTIAL CONTEMPORARIES

"A number of Rousseau's contemporaries who had no motives for painting him other than they knew him, have left full accounts of the impressions he made on them," p. 14, vol. i.

Amongst contemporaries who have left detailed accounts of their intimate relations with Rousseau, the Count d'Eschernay, in his *Mélanges de Littérature d'Histoire et de Philosophie* (1811) paints Jean Jacques in an epoch when his three great works had just been produced, in other words, when he was in full intellectual vigour. Nevertheless, had there been in him any natural disposition to misanthropy, Rousseau had already good cause to complain of fortune and his fellow men. In June, 1762, his *Emile* had been condemned by the Parliament of Paris to be burnt by the public executioner, and he himself had had to fly from France to avoid arrest. He had been banished from Yverdun, his first place of refuge, by the Senate of Berne; condemned at Geneva without a hearing; and compelled to seek a refuge in the province of Neuchatel because, on Prussian territory, he was protected from the persecuting edicts which pursued him in France and his native

country. In this position, some disposition to gloom and indignant complaint of his fellow men might have been looked for in a man described by his English biographer as a "worn-out creature, who only wanted to be left alone."[1] We do not find that this modern description corresponds with the account d'Eschernay gives of the Jean Jacques Rousseau whose tastes and pursuits he studied and shared at Motiers Travers, in 1763.

The Count d'Eschernay had met Rousseau before his exile, but had not then been admitted to any intimate conversation with the famous author. A little alarmed by his reputation for unsociability, D'Eschernay did not venture to call upon him at Motiers, until he was assured by Thérèse Levasseur, whom he met by accident, that her master (Thérèse's recognized post was that of Rousseau's housekeeper) would gladly receive him.

"I called the next day," writes d'Eschernay, "and found Rousseau sitting before his door, on a little stone bench, fully exposed to the sun, which in this month of February was not too powerful. His first look was at me: his second at his own (Armenian) costume.[2] 'It is rather mad,' he said; 'but it is convenient.' The acquaintanceship between us was soon made. . . . What excellent dinners I had at Motiers Travers, *tête-à-tête* with Jean Jacques! The fare was plain, both to my taste and his own; but excellently cooked, for in

[1] *Rousseau*, vol. ii. p. 96.

[2] Rousseau adopted, at Motiers Travers, the Armenian dress which had already been suggested to him by the Duchess of Luxembourg as a convenient costume, because the long coat, serving as a permissible dressing-gown, would allow him to go out of doors when he was compelled by the constitutional malady that attacked him every winter to be swathed in flannel bandages. Inasmuch as the reasons he had for adopting this dress are quite plainly stated in the *Confessions*, part ii. liv. v., Mr. Morley's suggestion that there was such a reason, although vanity *may* have been another motive, does not show the indulgent temper in the critic that a careless reader of this biography might attribute to the author. "*Vanity and a desire to attract notice may, we admit, have had something to do with Rousseau's adoption of an uncommon way of dressing. We, living a hundred years after, cannot possibly know whether it was so or not.*"

this plain way Mlle. Levasseur could not be outdone. Succulent vegetables and a thyme-flavoured leg of mutton, perfectly roasted—such was our fare. As for the conversation, it was before all things lively, and turned upon all manner of subjects: there was never anything in it forced or formal. Mlle. Levasseur would come in now and again, and interrupt our *tête-à-tête*. Rousseau would joke with her, and at her expense; and at mine too; and I would give him back as good as he gave. I used to pay Mlle. Levasseur many compliments on her cooking: but it rather surprised me that, in spite of my requests, he would not consent to her sitting with us at table. He was perfectly at ease, and very cheerful; and cheerfulness, freedom, and a good appetite, are necessary to the pleasures of the table. Sometimes, after dinner, he would sit down to his spinette, and accompany me or himself, in some Italian song. When my house was the place of meeting, I would play accompaniments on the harp to his romances, or my own; for there was a rivalry between us as to who would set the same words to the best music. In the summer evenings we would walk in the woods. When there was moonlight, he delighted to sit by the banks of the Reuse, and sing duets. We always had an audience; and especially the girls of the village were sure to come and listen to us."

D'Eschernay often went on botanizing expeditions with Rousseau, that sometimes lasted for several days.

"Who would believe it," he wrote. "This Jean Jacques, so much talked of for his misanthropy, was with us, in all our walks and excursions, the most simple, the most gentle, the most modest of men. It is true that he was in his element in a country, wild, but at the same time, extremely varied, picturesque and romantic; that we were all easy-going people; that he was at home amongst us; that we were breathing pure fresh air, in good health and with fine appetites. Our conversation touched on all subjects. *Rousseau never insisted on his own opinions with bitterness or obstinacy: the tone*

he took up was never dictatorial, and I remember that about French history the Colonel de Puri once or twice harshly contradicted him; and that Rousseau bowed his head and said nothing. One can judge from this how good a companion he was. . . . Often our talks turned on the men of letters and philosophers in Paris; he rendered justice to them all; and took the most favourable sides of them, even in the case of Voltaire, whose injuries he forgot, to remember only his talents. Although he had long since quarrelled with Diderot, he always spoke of him with praise. As I was on friendly terms with both of them, and as I spent my time alternately between Switzerland and Paris, Diderot had asked me to make his peace with Rousseau and to try to bring about a reconciliation between them. I took the matter up with great zeal. I spoke; I wrote; I entreated; but Rousseau was inexorable. Diderot's advances did him honour: and Rousseau's refusal to meet them half way is not the best act of his life. But the vengeance for it taken by Diderot after Rousseau's death in the savage note added to the *Essay upon Seneca* is inexcusable; or would be inexcusable, in any one except Diderot."

D'Eschernay does not seem to have noticed that one of the statements made in this savage note goes to prove that Rousseau was perhaps better advised in refusing Diderot's advances than the friend who honestly believed in their sincerity supposed. *Diderot professes that Rousseau constantly made advances to him, which he refused to meet; he also states that Rousseau had withdrawn the charge he had made against him (Diderot) as a betrayer of secrets; and Rousseau refused to withdraw these charges, in accordance with D'Eschernay's request, as a means of responding to Diderot's advances.*

But if Rousseau refused to be reconciled with Diderot, he also abstained from all complaints against him; and spoke of him and of Voltaire with praise. Here we have

a characteristic, noticed by D'Eschernay, that is also remarked upon by Bernardin de Saint Pierre, by Corancez, and indeed by all impartial witnesses who have reported their impressions of his familiar conversation. We have to weigh this contemporary evidence against Sainte-Beuve's assertion that Rousseau was "a bad tongue" *(une mauvaise langue)*. We have also to weigh against the legendary portrait of the morose, bilious, quarrelsome, vain, egotistical Jean Jacques, the opposite picture, of this unworldly but "companionable man"; who, although unfitted by love of independence, and need of solitary hours with his own thoughts and with nature, for life in a society which made such large claims on the time and freedom of its members as the society of his epoch, was admirably fitted for friendship and genial intercourse with his fellow men, by his natural cheerfulness, the absence of all pretentiousness or the desire to impose his opinions dogmatically upon others; and by the faculty of entering with real enjoyment into the simple pleasures of life.

But Rousseau had one misunderstanding with D'Eschernay, which might easily have developed into a quarrel; and the incident, related with perfect fairness, shows us in what manner and by virtue of what principle Rousseau may be described as exacting in friendship. He claimed from those who professed to be his friends one thing only—not extravagant devotion, nor exclusive affection, nor even unvarying agreement in his own moods, nor patience with his own foibles:—*but he claimed from them sincerity, that they should not on any occasion, even for his own benefit, deceive him.* Following Rousseau's history, it is extraordinary and tragical to discover how precisely this one thing he asked for from them, his friends never gave him! Not only his enemies Grimm and Diderot, who only wore the mask of friendship; not only his inconstant admirers, Madame d'Epinay, Madame d'Houdetot, the Duchess of Luxembourg; not only the one person he

trusted absolutely, Thérèse Levasseur,—but even his true friends and enthusiasts and devotees,—Moultou, Dupeyrou, Milord Marischal, the Countess de Boufflers, Madame de Verdelin, Madame de la Tour de Franqueville,—all of them, when dealing with the man whose chosen motto was *vitam impendere vero*, constantly deceived him.

"I may say," wrote D'Eschernay, "that during the fifteen years that our intimacy lasted, only upon one occasion had I any reason to complain of him. It is worthy of remark that I never found myself in a carriage with Rousseau; all our travels were done on foot. Bié is a place about five leagues from Motiers Travers. We found ourselves there (upon the occasion of a botanizing excursion) amongst a great number of people, and this being little to Rousseau's taste, or to mine, became a reason for shortening our stay. M. Dupeyrou, informed of our scheme, and anxious to become intimate with Rousseau, whom at this time he had only met once, begged me, through his friend the Colonel de Puri, who was at Bié, to direct our steps towards a country house he possessed at Cressier, between the Lake of Neuchatel and the Lake of Bienne, and very agreeably situated. It was agreed that, having looked over several houses on the borders of the lake, I should, as though by accident, conduct Rousseau to the one at Cressier, and advise him to choose it; that they would prepare dinner for us there; and await us. We arrived, as arranged, at about two o'clock; and I pointed out to him the advantages and the conveniences of this abode, and he seemed pleased with it. We entered the dining-room, and walked round it. He examined everything with approval, when, suddenly, an object struck his attention, and his face, that had been smiling, became clouded. This object was a large silver tankard and goblet. 'What is this?' he exclaimed; 'what does this silver mean here? Who does it belong to?'—'I don't know.'—'What? in a house to let, an empty house, a

silver tankard and goblet, left about in this way?'—'We do not look like thieves: they have let us in because they trust us.'—'No: there is some mystery here: and I do not like mysteries. To whom does this house belong, that you wish me to take?'—Questions succeeded each other, and I began to get embarrassed in my replies. Then, upon a signal we had agreed upon at Bié, M. de Puri and M. Dupeyrou, who were in an adjoining room, entered: confessed the little trick they had played, begged forgiveness, and sought to excuse me. But Rousseau was for the moment inexorable, and turning to me, said coldly: '*Sir, I do not like to be deceived even when the intention is to serve me.*'[1] We sat down to table, but the meal was not a cheerful one; conversation dragged; Rousseau was moody; and only spoke in monosyllables. After the coffee, we took a walk. Not a word more was said about his having the house, either by hire, or as a gift. The two other gentlemen left in a carriage, and I remained alone with Rousseau, always gloomy and badly disposed. We returned to Bié, and we had four leagues to walk; the first league was not agreeable; for he turned his back on me, as sulky as a child. He had spoken to me formerly at Motiers of the anxiety given him by the fear of losing, or of being robbed of manuscripts and papers, which he had wished me to take charge of; but as I was constantly travelling at that time, between Switzerland and Paris, he recognized that I could not undertake the responsibility of such a charge. By reminding him of this conversation, I succeeded in getting him to listen to me. I told him, what was perfectly true, that in proposing he should take the house at Cressier, I wished to bring him into intimate relations with a trustworthy man, who might be of extreme use to him; that M. Dupeyrou, established at Neuchatel, was exactly the man he wanted with whom he could deposit his papers; that he was my intimate friend, and

[1] See p. 15—vol. i.

that I could reply for his honesty as for my own. After having scolded me, he was ready to thank me; his good humour returned, and we went our way to sup at Bié more cheerfully than we had dined. And this marks the commencement of the friendship between M. Dupeyrou and Rousseau."

Let us now hear Bernardin de Saint Pierre's account of Rousseau in 1772, when Mr. Morley paints him as "a mournful, sombre figure, looming shadowily in the dark glow of sundown, among sad and desolate places." [1]

"The society of Rousseau was most agreeable to me," wrote Bernardin de Saint Pierre.[2] "He had not the vanity of most great men of letters, he shared the obligations of talker and of listener, and joined in a conversation with so little pretentiousness that amongst those who did not know him, simple people looked upon him as an ordinary man, and fine talkers held him very inferior to themselves. Far from seeking to shine, he admitted himself, with a modesty very rare, and in my opinion

[1] Vol. ii. p. 315.

[2] Oeuvres de Bernardin de Saint Pierre, vol. xii. *Mes relations avec J. J. Rousseau.*

Bernardin de Saint Pierre composed some verses which he wished should be inscribed on a monument dedicated to Fénélon and to Rousseau—as two "lovers of men."

"A la gloire durable et pure
De ceux dont le génie éclaira la vertu,
Combattit à la fois l'erreur et les abus,
Et tenta d'amener le siècle à la nature;
Aux Jean Jacques Rousseau aux Français Fénélon,
J'ai dédié ce monument d'argile,
Que j'ai consacré par leurs noms,
Plus augustes que ceux de César et d'Achille;
Ils ne sont pas fameux par nos malheurs:
Ils n'ont point, pauvres laboureurs!
Ravis vos boeufs et vos javelles;
Bergères, vos amants, nourisson, vos mamelles,
Rois, les états où vous regnez.
Mais vous les comblerez de gloire
Si vous donnez à leur mémoire
Les pleurs, qu'ils vous ont épargnés."

mistaken, that he was not a good conversationalist. 'I am only witty,' he said, 'half an hour after other people; and I know what I ought to say when it is too late to say it.' But this slowness in reply belonged to his natural equity, which did not allow him to pronounce an opinion on any subject until he had examined it; to his genius, that was not satisfied with commonplace or superficial views; and to his modesty, especially, which disposed him to distrust his powers to shine. He was amongst fine wits, with his simplicity, like a young girl with her natural complexion amongst women of the world, exquisite in powder and rouge. But in a *tête-à-tête*, in intimacy, and upon subjects which concern human happiness, his soul soared, his sentiments became touching, his ideas profound, his illustrations sublime, and his language as impassioned as were his writings. But what I valued even above his genius was his scrupulous honesty. He was one of the few men of letters who have experienced misfortune, to whom one could confide one's intimate thoughts without any fear of their being maliciously reported or dishonestly appropriated.

"Kindness of heart appeared to him the quality superior to all others; it was the foundation of his own character. He preferred a trait of sensibility to all the epigrams of Martial. By nature he was gay, confiding, and open. Four or five causes, the least amongst which has sometimes sufficed to make a good man wicked, contributed to alter his original character—persecutions, calumnies, bad fortune, illnesses, excess of brain work—a kind of work that tires the mind, and affects the temper; but all these causes united never could destroy in Rousseau the love of justice. He carried this sentiment into all his pursuits and tastes. I have often seen him, when botanizing, refuse to pick a plant when it was the only one of its kind. He has been accused of pride, because he refused dinners where men of the world took pleasure in seeing men of letters struggle against each

other like gladiators. He was proud, but he was proud with all men alike, recognizing no distinction between them save that of virtue.

"The proud, also, taxed him with pride. A truly proud man desires to subjugate others. Rousseau, alone, without ambition, without fortune, wished only to live freely. He gave himself a trade in order to be independent.[1] But whilst seeking to emancipate himself from society, he did not wish to emancipate himself from the laws, and to regulate his own conduct he took laws even more severe—the laws of his own conscience.

"All the faculties of his mind, his morals, his works, bore the stamp of his character. There was never a man who tried more consistently to live in accordance with his principles: but often such a man may appear inconsistent, because all the circumstances that surround him change, whilst he remains unaltered."

A charge frequently made against Rousseau by the Encyclopædists, and taken from them literally by Saint-Marc Girardin and by E. Scherer, is that Rousseau did not practise seriously the trade of a copyist of music; that he professed to earn his bread by this means; but that in reality he lived upon his books, and upon the gifts that his admirers had the simplicity to believe Thérèse accepted without his knowledge; and that, further, he was quite ready to accept and solicit help from other men of letters, whilst posing in the sight of the public as more disinterested than they were, by openly refusing pensions and patronage which they found themselves compelled to accept.

Elsewhere in this inquiry, it has been seen how much depends upon the question of whether Rousseau did, or did not, honestly use the trade of a copyist to procure his own livelihood and that of Thérèse when we have to decide the case between himself and the Encyclopædists. Here, however, it will be enough to give Bernardin de Saint Pierre's account of what he saw and

[1] The trade of copyist of music was adopted by Rousseau in 1750.

heard in the Rue Platrière, upon one occasion when he was an unexpectedly early visitor there.

"I was with him, in his room, upon a certain morning," he wrote, "and thus I saw the usual entrance, one after the other, of the servants who came to fetch the rolls of music he had copied; or to bring him fresh pieces to copy. Now, he would undertake the work; and now, he would decline it, using in these practical details the usual civility and business sense of a good workman. Watching him behave with this simplicity, I had a difficulty to remember the fame of this great man. When we were alone, I said to him: 'Why do you not turn your talents to other uses?' 'Oh,' he replied, 'the world knows two Rousseaus; one rich, or who might have been rich had he chosen it, a capricious, singular, fantastical man: this is the Rousseau of the public; but the other one is obliged to work for his living, and this is the man you see.'—'But your books ought to have put you in good circumstances? They have enriched your publishers.'—'I have received from them 20,000 livres.[1] If I had been paid this sum all at once, I could have invested it: but I have spent it as it came. A Dutch publisher, by gratitude for what he has gained from me, has settled on me a life pension of 600 livres, 300 of which will revert to my wife after my death. This is all my fortune: to keep up my little household costs a hundred louis more than I have; and this sum I have to earn.'—'Could you not have followed some other occupation than that of a copyist of music?'—'I like this occupation, you see. It is work I find a pleasure in doing. Besides, I am neither sinking beneath, nor lifting myself above, the state of life into which I was born. I am the son of a workman, and a workman myself; I have always copied music, for the matter of that; and I should probably do it for my own pleasure

[1] A French "livre" was worth rather less than a shilling; twenty-two livres to the pound. In other words, Rousseau received in all from his publishers less than a thousand pounds.

even if I had no need to do it. What I am doing now I have done since I was fourteen years of age.'"

Corancez's account of Rousseau belongs to the same epoch, but extends over a longer period of years.

"I saw Rousseau constantly and without interruption during the last twelve years of his life. My intention is not to praise, nor to justify him; but to show him as I knew him, and to keep to those facts of which I was an eye-witness. It will be seen that when he was himself he had a rare simplicity; with the ingenuousness, cheerfulness, kindliness and timidity of a child. I remarked in him a very rare quality. Throughout the twelve years that I lived on intimate terms with him, I never heard him speak evil of any single person. Often when speaking of or mentioning certain persons, he would class them amongst his enemies; but even in this case never, at least in my presence, did he allow himself to enlarge upon this statement, either by making any imputation or by employing injurious terms. One day I praised Diderot before him, and it is known the hatred Diderot had for him. I added, that I found one grave fault in him, that he did not make his meaning clear to others; and that I believed often it was not clear even to himself. 'Take care,' said Rousseau, 'of what you say; when Diderot treats any subject and his reader does not understand, the fault is not perhaps Diderot's.' This is the only harsh thing he ever said to me. The day after Voltaire was crowned at the Théatre Français (only a brief time before the death of 'both these great men') one of those personages who must put in their word everywhere, seeking no doubt to please Rousseau, began to relate to him the circumstances of the ceremony, and allowed himself many mockeries about this crowning, in the style such personages love to employ. 'What!' exclaimed Rousseau, with much heat, 'can you dare to blame the honours rendered to Voltaire in his temple where he is the god; and by the priests who for fifty years draw their living from his

masterpieces?' I have said he was simple, and had certain childlike characteristics. One day I entered his room and found him laughing joyously, striding up and down his room and proudly surveying all it contained. 'All this belongs to me,' he said. It should be realized that '*all this*' signified a camp bedstead, some rush-bottom chairs, an ordinary table, and a writing table in walnut wood. 'Well, but,' I asked, 'did not all this belong to you yesterday? For quite a long time I have known you as the possessor of all I see here.' 'Yes, but I owed the upholsterer a bill that I have just finished paying off this morning.' I have said, too, he was kindhearted. Although surly with strangers who intruded upon him, he was extremely careful not to wound those with whom he felt he could safely follow the impulse of his heart. For some time he had left off keeping me to dinner. He feared that I should attribute the reason to a wrong cause. 'I do not beg you to stay to dinner,' he said one day, 'because the state of my fortune does not permit me to do so. Never mind how little expense I put myself to for you, I should be forced to take it from our necessities.' I wished to speak; but he continued: 'if I tell you my situation, it is in order that you should not attribute the change in my conduct to any change in my sentiments towards you.' Then, smiling, he went on: 'I like to drink at my meals a certain quantity of pure wine. First of all I invented the plan of dividing my portion into two equal parts; but the result was that at neither meal did I get enough. I have made up my mind to another plan: I drink water at one meal; and keep the whole of my wine for the other.' How much there is in this little trait for an attentive reader! What good humour, candour and superiority over other men in this ability to arrange one's wants by one's fortune, and to find nothing to be ashamed of in doing so. Add to this the reply he made when questioned upon this point: 'I am poor; but there is flesh left on

my bones yet.' 'Je suis pauvre à la vérité ; mais je n'ai pas le cou pelé.' . . .

"I have said," continued Corancez, "that he was cheerful by natural disposition. Twenty times I had the opportunity of noticing this quality in him, which, had it been allowed free play, would have made him happy; unfortunately the malady he inherited spoilt his chance of enjoying life. If I had in view only my own pleasure, with what delight should I not dwell on those anecdotes which recall him to me in happy moments. But my readers would complain that I talked too much of unimportant details."

An anecdote related by Grétry, and belonging also to this epoch, shows how, even in these last and unquestionably saddest years of his life in the Rue Platriere, Rousseau's natural cheerfulness and *bonhomie* survived, and how powerless was even the conviction of the injustice towards him of his fellow men to transform him into the morose misanthrope painted by his enemies.

"I knew," wrote Grétry,[1] "a very ordinary sort of girl who lodged in the same house as Jean Jacques in the Rue Platriere. 'There is a good old fellow (*un bonhomme*) who lodges overhead,' said this girl to me, 'who often comes down to see me when he hears me singing.' (She was being trained for the opera.) 'What sort of man is he?' I asked; 'what is his name?' 'Oh, I don't know his name; but he says he will give me advice about my talent. I laughed when I looked at him. "You don't mean to say *you* sing?" I said. "Yes," he replied: "and I compose music sometimes." 'What else did he say?' 'I hardly recollect; he looks at me more than he talks.' 'And what do you do?' 'My faith! I go about my house work, I sing, and I take very little notice of him in his corner. The other day, when I was singing, he told me I did not say some of the words rightly: "Oh, about that I shall ask my master," I said; "I'm not going to say it differently for

[1] *Essai sur la Musique*, vol. ii. p. 205.

you." Well, he laughed like a silly each time I sang this passage. Only lately I had a regular scene with him.' 'Tell me all about it; don't forget anything.' 'Why; do you know this man?' 'I believe so: come, tell me all about this scene.' 'Well, he was sitting on the same chair you have, and as I was going out I was putting on some rouge. "You are much prettier," he said, "without that varnish." "Oh bother," said I; "one doesn't want to look like a corpse." "At your age, you don't need art to look well; now, I hardly know you." "Nonsense! at any age when one is pale, one wants rouge; you yourself ought to use it." "I?" "Yes:" and with that I jumped on to his lap and began to rouge his face in spite of himself. He ran away wiping his face; and I thought he would suffocate in the staircase, he was laughing so. Besides, that's the way he likes to be treated.'" "Silly child," commented Grétry, "how little she knew the favour done her."

Every one recollects the description given by Diderot in 1757 of the horrible expression of Rousseau's countenance when his soul revealed itself there; and which so impressed this sensitive atheistic philosopher that it led him to believe in devils and hell. One cannot but feel that the recollection of this terrific expression and of its extraordinary effect upon Diderot must have had something to do with the impression produced upon Mr. Morley's mind, by a portrait of Jean Jacques painted during his residence in England, and which Rousseau's modern biographer found "*as appalling in its realism as some of the dark pits that open before the readers of the 'Confessions.'*" "When a man's hindrances have sprung up from within," writes Mr. Morley, "and the ill-fought battle of his days has been with his own passions and morbid broodings and unchastened dreams, the eye and the facial lines tell the story of that profound moral defeat which leaves only desolation and the misery that is formless."[1]

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 281, 282.

It will be well to see how Rousseau's personal appearance was described by contemporaries, who have recorded the impression he made upon them at an age when what a man has habitually thought and felt and dreamed of during years of intellectual and moral activity does set its stamp upon the countenance.

Here is Bernardin de Saint Pierre's account of Rousseau's outer man, at sixty years of age.

"He was thin, and a medium height—one of his shoulders appeared slightly higher than the other; otherwise he was well proportioned. He had a brown complexion, some colour in the cheeks; a well-shaped nose, a beautiful mouth; a forehead, high and round; and eyes full of fire. The lines beneath the nostrils slanting to the mouth, which are characteristic of the physiognomy, in his case expressed great sensibility, and something that amounted to sadness. In his countenance were three or four signs characteristic of melancholy; the deep-set eyes, the thick eyebrows, the profound sadness expressed by certain wrinkles of the brow; but much gaiety, and even some mockery were indicated by a number of small lines at the external corners of the eyes, which disappeared entirely when he laughed. All the passions that agitated him painted themselves successively on his face, in accordance with the effects upon his soul of the subjects discussed; in repose, his face kept the imprint of all these affections, and produced an impression at once of kindliness and of fine intelligence; and of a something inexpressibly touching, lovable and deserving of respect and pity."

"His eyes were like 'stars'," said, of him, the Prince de Ligne; "his genius shone in his gaze, and electrified me."

"There was nothing in his physiognomy," said another contemporary, Magellan, "which announced his genius except the extreme vivacity of his eyes."

"In the days when I knew him," wrote Grétry, "Jean Jacques might have passed for a neatly-dressed

peasant. His eyes were brilliant, but deeply set; he walked with a large stick, his head bent; he was neither tall nor short; he spoke little, but always well, and with earnestness and vivacity."

NOTE B

FOUR PRINCIPAL LIBELS AFTER J. J. ROUSSEAU'S DEATH, JULY 2ND, 1778, AND BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF THE SECOND PART OF *CONFESSIONS*, END OF 1788.

1. July 15, 1778. Grimm, in the *Correspondance Littéraire*, first circulated the false rumour that Rousseau had committed suicide.

2. October 5th, 1778. La Harpe, in the *Mercure de France*, published Diderot's false history about the *First Discourse;* Grimm's falsehood about Rousseau's "humiliations" suffered at the hands of M. and Madame Dupin, and the hardly veiled accusation that Jean Jacques had falsely claimed to be the composer of the *Devin du Village.*

3. December, 1778. Diderot's abominable "Note" added on to his *Essai sur Sénèque* invited the world at large to detest an "artificial scoundrel" and a "monster" who had left behind him memoirs destined to blacken the characters of his old friends. In the second edition of this Essay, given under the title of *Essai sur les Règnes de Claude et de Néron*, and published in 1782, Diderot added on a long list of fresh invectives by way of justifying his abuse of Rousseau.

4. June, 1779. D'Alembert, in his *Eloge de Milord Maréchal*, seized the opportunity of accusing J. J. Rousseau of having behaved with abominable ingratitude to his "benefactor."

All these libels were refuted at the time when they appeared, and excited general indignation—so much so, that we find the authors of them complaining of the fanaticism of the public that will not endure adverse criticism of the popular favourite Jean Jacques. Never-

theless, all of them were resuscitated some thirty or forty years later, and all of them at the present hour are repeated by modern critics, as though they represented historical facts; or, at any rate, the authoritative judgments passed upon him by his contemporaries. It is necessary, then, to prove the true worth of these accusations.

Grimm's Calumny. 1. *The alleged "suicide" of J. J. Rousseau.*

The rumour secretly circulated by Grimm amongst European sovereigns, that "the circumstances of Rousseau's sudden death at Ermenonville pointed to suicide, and that the belief that he had destroyed himself was generally established in the neighbourhood,"[1] found its way back by the 20th July to the much less "secret" *Memoirs* of Bachaumont:—

"Comme on avait fait courir des bruits sinistres sur la mort de M. J. J. Rousseau, qu'on prétendait volontaire" (wrote the editor of Bachaumont's *Memoirs*),[2] "il se répand un extrait des minutes du baillage et vicomté d'Ermenonville, du Juillet 3, 1778, par lequel il est constaté *juridiquement, et d'après la visite des gens de l'Art,* que Rousseau est mort d'une apoplexie séreuse."

The "judicial" publication spoken of by Bachaumont was the *procès-verbal* signed by surgeons who had examined the body, and who certified to the natural causes of death. These documents were supported by a letter from the Count René de Girardin, who had given Rousseau his last retreat at Ermenonville; and by a second letter from the Doctor le Bègue de Presles, who had visited him within a few days of his death, and who testified to his tranquillity of mind, and his satisfaction with his surroundings at Ermenonville. I am reproducing here the legal documents, that can still be verified in the registries at Ermenonville.

[1] *Correspondance Littéraire,* Juillet 15, 1778.
[2] Tome xii. p. 53.

COPIE LITTÉRALE

DU PROCÈS VERBAL DRESSÉ PAR LES CHIRURGIENS, APRÈS LA MORT DE ROUSSEAU.

Extrait des minutes du greffe du bailliage et vicomté d'Ermenonville.

L'an mil sept cent-soixante dix-huit, le vendredi trois juillet, heure de relevée ;

Nous *Louis Blondel*, lieutenant du bailliage et vicomté d'Ermenonville, sur le réquisitoire du procureur fiscal de ce bailliage, à nous judiciairement fait, à l'instant qu'il a appris que la jour d'hier, environ les dix heures du matin, monsieur J. J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, âgé d'environ soixante-huit ans, demeurant en ce lieu d'Ermenonville depuis environ six semaines, avec demoiselle Thérèse Levasseur son épouse, est tombé dans une apoplexie céreuse ; qu'il a été gardé exactement jusqu'à ce jour et heure, et que malgré ces soins et les secours qu'on lui a procurés, il est mort réellement : que, comme cette mort est surprenante, il requiert qu'il nous plaise nous transporter, assisté de lui procureur fiscal, et de Jean Landru, sergent en cette jurisdiction, en la demeure dudit sieur Rousseau, étant dans un appartement au second, dans un pavillon du château, en entrant à main droite, pour y constater, autant qu'il sera possible, le genre de mort dudit sieur Rousseau ; à l'effet de quoi il fit comparoir devant nous les personnes des sieurs Gilles-Casimir Chenu, maître chirurgien demeurant en ce lieu, et Simon Bouget, maître chirurgien demeurant à Montagny. En conséquence dudit réquisitoire, sommes transportés en la demeure dudit sieur Rousseau, accompagnés dudit procureur fiscal, dudit Landru, sergent, desdits sieurs Chenu et Bouvet ; où étant avons trouvé ladite dame veuve Rousseau, et laquelle nous a montré le corps mort dudit sieur son mari ; après quoi nous avons desdits sieurs Chenu et

Bouvet pris et reçu le serment au cas requis et accoutumé, sous lequel ils ont juré et promis de bien et fidèlement se comporter en la visite dont il s'agit. Ce fait, les dits sieurs Chenu et Bouvet, experts que nous nommons de notre office, ont à l'instant fait la visite du corps dudit sieur Rousseau; et après l'avoir vu et examiné dans toutes les parties de son corps, nous ont tous deux rapporté d'une commune voix que ledit sieur Rousseau est mort d'une apoplexie céreuse; ce qu'ils ont affirmé véritable, et déclaré en leur ame et conscience.

Dont, et de tout ce que dessus, nous avons fait et dressé le present procès verbal, pour servir et valoir ce que de raison; et ont, ledit procureur fiscal, ledit Landru, lesdits sieurs Chenu et Bouvet, signé avec nous et notre greffier. Ainsi signé à la minute, G. Bimont, Landru, Chenu, Simon Bouvet, N. Harlet, et Blondel, avec paraphe.

RAPPORT

DE M. CASTERÈS, CHIRURGIEN A SENLIS, DE L'OUVERTURE DU CORPS DE JEAN-JACQUES.

Je soussigné—Casterès, lieutenant de M. le premier chirurgien à Senlis, ayant été appelé au château d'Ermenonville, ce jourd'hui trois juillet mil sept cent-soixante dix-huit, et requis de faire l'ouverture du corps de M. J. J. Rousseau, de Genève, décédé le jour précédent, audit lieu, vers onze heures du matin, après environ une heure de douleurs de dos, de poitrine et de tête; lequel avait recommandé, tant dans cette attaque que dans une précédente maladie, qu'on ouvrit son corps après sa mort pour découvrir, s'il était possible, les causes de plusieurs maux et incommodités auxquels il avait été sujet en différents temps de sa vie, et dont on n'avait pas pu s'assurer alors le siége ni la nature. J'ai, ledit jour, à six heures du soir, procédé à ladite ouverture et recherche, avec l'aide de mes confrères soussignés, Gilies-Casimir

Chenu, chirurgien à Ermenonville, et Simon Bouvet, chirurgien à Montagny, et en présence de MM. Achille-Guillaume Le Bègue de Presle, écuyer, médecin de la Faculté de Paris, et censeur royal, et Bruslé de Villeron, médecin à Senlis. L'examen des parties externes du corps nous a fait voir un bandage qui indiquait que M. Rousseau avait deux hernies inguinales, peu considérables, dont nous parlerons ci-après. Tout le reste du corps ne présentait rien contre nature; ni taches, ni boutons, ni dartres, ni blessures, si ce n'est une légère déchirure au front, occasionée par la chute du défunt sur le carreau de sa chambre, au moment où il fut frappé de mort. L'ouverture de la poitrine nous en a fait voir les parties internes très-saines. Le volume, la consistance et la couleur, tant de leur surface que de l'intérieur, étaient très-naturels.

En procédant à l'examen des parties internes du bas-ventre, nous avons cherché avec attention à découvrir la cause des douleurs de reins et difficultés d'uriner qu'on nous a dit que M. Rousseau avait éprouvées en différents temps de sa vie, et qui se renouvelaient quelquefois lorsqu'il était long-temps dans une voiture rude. Mais nous n'avons pu trouver ni dans les reins, ni dans la vessie, les uretères et l'urètre, non plus que dans les organes et canaux séminaux, aucune partie, aucun point qui fût maladif ou contre nature. Le volume, la capacité, la consistance, la couleur de toutes les parties internes du bas-ventre étaient parfaitement saines, et n'avaient point la mauvaise odeur qu'elles exhalent d'ordinaire dans un temps aussi chaud, au bout de plus de trente heures de mort. L'estomac ne contenait que le café au lait que M. Rousseau avait pris, suivant sa coutume, pour son déjeuner, vers sept heures, avec sa femme. Les portions des intestins qui avaient formé les hernies ne portaient aucun signe qu'il y eût eu ni inflammation ni étranglement.

Ainsi, il y a lieu de croire que les douleurs dans la région de la vessie, et les difficultés d'uriner que M.

Rousseau avait éprouvées en différents temps, surtout durant la première moitié de sa vie, venaient d'un état spasmodique des parties voisines du col de la vessie, ou du col même, ou d'une augmentation de volume de la prostase ; maux qui se sont dissipés en même temps que le corps se sera affaibli et maigri en vieillissant.

Quant aux coliques auxquelles M. Rousseau a été sujet depuis environs l'âge de cinquante ans, et qui n'étaient ni fort longues, ni très-vives, elles dépendaient, selon toute apparence, des hernies inguinales.

L'ouverture de la tête, et l'examen des parties renfermées dans le crâne nous ont fait voir une quantité très-considérable (plus de huit pouces) de sérosité épanchée entre la substance du cerveau et les membranes qui la recouvrent.

Ne peut-on pas, avec beaucoup de vraisemblance, attribuer la mort de M. Rousseau à la pression de cette sérosité, a son infiltration dans les enveloppes, ou à la substance de tout le système nerveux ? Du moins il est certain que l'on n'a point trouvé d'autre cause apparente de mort dans le cadavre d'un grand nombre de sujets péris aussi promptement. Ce qui tend à prouver que la cause de mort a attaqué l'origine des nerfs, ou les parties principales du système nerveux, c'est que M. Rousseau ne s'est plaint, durant la dernière heure de sa vie, que d'un fourmillement et picotement très-incommode à la plante des pieds ; ensuite d'une sensation de froid, et d'écoulement de liqueur froide, le long de l'épine du dos, puis de douleurs vives à la poitrine ; enfin de douleurs vives, lancinantes et déchirantes, dans l'intérieur de la tête.

Ce 3 juillet, mil sept cent-soixante-dix-huit. Signé à la minute : Le Bègue de Presle, Casterès, lieutenant ; Bruslé de Villeron, d. m.

Plus bas est écrit : Contrôlé à Dammartin, ce deux janvier 1779, par Ganneron, qui a reçu quatorze sols. *Signé* Ganneron, avec paraphe.

PROCÈS VERBAL

DE L'INHUMATION DU CORPS DE J. J. ROUSSEAU.

La samedi suivant, 4 dudit mois et an, le corps de J. J. Rousseau, embaumé, et enfermé dans un cercueil de plomb, a été inhumé, à onze heures du soir, en ce lieu d'Ermenonville, dans l'enceinte du parc, sur l'île des Peupliers, au milieu de la pièce d'eau appelée le petit Lac, et située au midi du château, sous une tombe décorée et élevée d'environ six pieds.

Les honneurs funèbres lui ont été rendus par René-Louis de Girardin, chevalier vicomte d'Ermenonville, mestre-de-camp de dragons, chevalier de l'ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis, dans le château duquel l'amitié l'avait conduit et fait établir sa demeure ; et en présence des amis du défunt, qui ont signé le présent acte d'inhumation. Savoir : Achille-Guillaume Le Bègue de Presle, écuyer, docteur en médecine, censeur royal ; Jean Romilly, citoyen de Genève ; Guillaume-Olivier de Corancez, avocat au parlement, et Germain Bimond, procureur-fiscal. Signé à la minute, R. L. Girardin, Olivier de Corancez, Romilly, Le Bègue de Presle, G. Bimond, et N. Harlet, greffier.

ACTE DE DÉPOT

DU RAPPORT DE M. CASTERÈS, LIEUTENANT DU PREMIER CHIRURGIEN DE SENLIS.

Aujourd'hui, deux janvier mil sept cent-soixante dix-neuf, dix heures du matin, pardevant nous Louis Blondel, lieutenant du bailliage et vicomté d'Ermenonville :

Est comparu le procureur-fiscal de ce bailliage et vicomté d'Ermenonville, lequel a apporté, mis et déposé ès-mains de notre greffier, un procès verbal fait le trois juillet mil sept cent-soixante-dix-huit, contrôlé à Dammartin, cejourd'hui, par Ganneron, par le sieur Casterès,

lieutenant de M. le premier chirurgien à Senlis, et en présence de maître Achille-Guillaume Le Bègue de Presle, écuyer-médecin de la Faculté de Paris, et censeur royal, et de maître Bruslé de Villeron, médecin audit Senlis, de l'ouverture du corps de M. J. J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, décédé en ce lieu d'Ermenonville, le deux juillet dernier, pour être joint et annexé au procès verbal qui constate le genre de mort dudit sieur Rousseau, du trois dudit mois de juillet dernier, et servir et valoir ce que de raison ; ledit procès verbal étant sur une feuille de papier à lettre, écrit sur trois pages, et sept lignes et demie sur la quatrième : la première page commençant par le mot "Je soussigné" et finissant par les mots "frappé de mort" ; et la quatrième commençant par le mot "l'origine" et finissant par la date "ce trois juillet mil sept cent soixante-dix-huit."

Signé au bas dudit acte de dépôt : Le Bègue de Presle, Casterès, lieutenant, et Bruslé de Villeron, d. m.

Et a en outre, ledit procureur-fiscal et notre greffier, signé avec nous. Ainsi signé à la minute : G. Bimont, N. Harlet, et Blondel, avec paraphe.

Fait, expédité et délivré par moi greffier du bailliage et vicomté d'Ermenonville, soussigné, et conforme à la minute, ce deux janvier mil sept cent-soixante-dix-neuf.

Signé N. Harlet.

Scellé.

EXTRAIT

D'UNE NOTICE SUR LES DERNIERS JOURS DE J. J. ROUSSEAU, PAR SON AMI M. LE BÈGUE DE PRESLE, ET IMPRIMÉE A PARIS EN 1778.

"M. Rousseau, pendant son séjour à Ermenonville, passait une grande partie de la journée à la recherche des plantes, et aux soins qu'elles exigent pour être mises en herbier.

"Le 26 juin 1778, dit M. de Presle, il me demanda de lui envoyer des papiers pour continuer son herbier, et

de lui apporter dans le mois de septembre, des livres de voyages pour amuser sa femme et sa servante, pendant les longues soirées d'hiver ; et de lui apporter aussi plusieurs ouvrages de botanique sur les chiendents, les champignons et les mousses. Il m'annonça même qu'il pourrait se remettre à quelques ouvrages commencés, tels que l'opéra de *Daphnis* et de la suite *d'Emile.*

"Tous ces projets démontrent assez que M. Rousseau jouissait encore, dans les derniers jours de juin, peu de temps avant sa mort, de la santé et de la tranquillité nécessaires pour les former et les goûter, et qu'il avait l'espérance de vivre encore quelques années dans sa retraite.

"Le suicide, ajoute M. de Presle, était contre les principes de Rousseau, et je me suis assuré, par l'examen le plus scrupuleux de toutes les circonstances qui ont accompagné, précédé ou suivi sa mort, qu'elle a été naturelle et non provoquée."

In this letter of the Count René de Girardin to a lady (who was probably Madame d'Houdetot), written immediately after Rousseau's death, we have the testimony of the most competent amongst contemporary witnesses as to his mental and moral condition during the last months of his life.

LETTRE A SOPHIE, COMTESSE DE ***, PAR RENÉ GIRARDIN, SUR LES DERNIERS MOMENTS DE J. J. ROUSSEAU, DATÉE D'ERMENONVILLE, LE 12 JUILLET 1778.

"La plus grande consolation, madame, de ceux qui restent est de parler de ceux qui sont partis. La seule manière de faire quelquefois illusion à la douleur de leur perte, c'est de se retracer le charme de leur existence ; c'est en quelque sorte leur rendre la parole que de se rappeler leurs discours ; c'est leur rendre le mouvement que de se représenter leurs actions ; et c'est ainsi que le sentiment est le feu créateur qui donne la vie aux objets inanimés, et qui peut la rendre à la mort même.

" Je crois, madame, vous avoir dit, dans ma dernière lettre, avec quel tendre épanchement de cœur le plus sensible des hommes avait reçu la proposition de se retirer à Ermenonville, et qu'il s'y était rendu d'autant plus volontiers qu'il lui avait été impossible de se méprendre sur le sentiment qui l'avait dicté. Nous partîmes donc sur-le-champ pour lui faire arranger un petit appartement, sous un toit de chaume, situé au milieu d'un ancien verger. Cette habitation champêtre semblait lui appartenir de droit, puisqu'ayant été entièrement disposée suivant la description de l'Élysée de Clarens, il en était le créateur; mais, quelque diligence qu'on pût apporter au petit arrangement intérieur qui lui convenait, l'impatience de son cœur fut encore plus prompte que la main des ouvriers. Sa poitrine, oppressée depuis si longtemps, avait un si grand besoin de respirer l'air pur de la campagne, que, peu de jours après notre départ, il vint nous trouver avec un de ses amis et des miens. Sitôt qu'il se vit dans la forêt qui descend jusques au pied de la maison, sa joie fut si grande qu'il ne fut plus possible à son ami de le retenir en voiture. '*Non*, dit-il, *il y a si long-temps que je n'ai pu voir un arbre qui ne fut couvert de fumée ou de poussière! ceux-ci sont si frais! Laissez-moi m'en approcher le plus que je pourrai; je voudrais n'en pas perdre un seul.*' Il fit près d'une lieue à pied de cette manière. Sitôt que je le vis arriver, je courus à lui. '*Ah! monsieur*, s'écria-t-il en se jetant à mon col, *il y a long-temps que mon cœur me faisait désirer de venir ici, et mes yeux me font désirer actuellement d'y rester toute ma vie.*' Et surtout, lui dis-je, s'ils peuvent lire jusques dans le fond de nos ames. Bientôt ma femme arriva, au milieu de tous mes enfants; le sentiment les groupait autour de cette douce et tendre mère d'une manière plus heureuse et plus touchante que n'aurait pu le faire le plus habile peintre: à cette vue il ne put retenir ses larmes. '*Ah! madame*, dit-il, *que pourrais-je vous dire? vous voyez mes larmes; ce sont les seules de joie que j'aie versées depuis bien long-*

temps, et je sens qu'elles me rappellent à la vie.' Il avait laissé sa femme à Paris ; elle s'y était chargée de tous les soins du déménagement, afin de lui en épargner le tourment et l'agitation ; car plus il était capable de s'occuper de grandes choses, moins il l'était de s'occuper de petites. Il eût mille fois mieux gouverné un grand royaume que ses propres affaires, et il eût plus aisément dicté des lois à l'univers que des clauses et des articles à un procureur ou à un notaire.

"En attendant que sa chaumière fût arrangée, il se détermina à s'établir dans un petit pavillon séparé du château par des arbres, et manda à sa femme de venir le trouver le plus tôt qu'elle pourrait ; car elle lui était devenue si nécessaire qu'il n'aurait jamais pu en supporter la perte, et n'en pouvait pas soutenir l'absence.

"Si vous eussiez vu la joie de cet homme si tendre, lorsqu'il l'entendit arriver ! Nous étions à table, nous nous levâmes, afin qu'il pût se lever lui-même en toute liberté : il courut au-devant d'elle, et l'embrassa avec la plus grande effusion de tendresse et de larmes.

"Les sentiments de cet homme extraordinaire étaient exaltés en tout point fort au-delà de ceux des hommes ordinaires. Il aimait le genre humain comme ses amis ; ses amis comme sa femme ; sa femme comme sa maîtresse. De sorte que, si le moindre sentiment chez lui était un amour, il n'est pas étonnant que le moindre soupçon de haine ou de trahison fût pour lui le même supplice que la jalousie pour un amant.

"Dès qu'il se vit en pleine possession de la liberté et de la campagne, après laquelle il soupirait depuis si long-temps, sa passion pour la contemplation de la nature se ralluma de telle manière, qu'il s'y livra avec des transports qui ressemblaient à de l'ivresse. Aussitôt que les petits oiseaux, qu'il attirait sur sa fenêtre avec un soin paternel, venaient y saluer la naissance du jour, il se levait pour aller faire sa prière au lever du soleil. C'est à ce spectacle solennel, dont les fumées épaisses de Paris l'avaient si long-temps privé, qu'il allait tous les

matins exalter son ame. Il ramassait ensuite quelques plantes qu'il venait soigneusement rapporter à ses chers oiseaux, qu'il appelait ses musiciens, et venait déjeuner avec sa femme : ensuite il repartait pour des promenades plus éloignées. Ce qui l'enchantait le plus était de pouvoir errer au gré de la nature, de sa fantaisie, et quelquefois du hasard. Tantôt il se promenait dans les plaines fertiles, tantôt dans les prairies parées de mille fleurs, dont chacune avait pour lui son mérite ; tantôt il montait sur les coteaux ou parcourait les pâturages ombragés d'arbres fruitiers. Le plus souvent, et surtout dans les ardeurs du jour, il s'enfonçait dans la profondeur de la forêt ; d'autrefois il se promenait en rêvant sur le bord des eaux, ou bien gravissait sur les montagnes couvertes de bois et qui dominent le village. Le pays le plus sauvage avait pour lui des charmes d'autant plus intéressants qu'il y retrouvait mieux la touche originale et franche de la nature. Les roches, les sapins, les genévriers tortueux y rappelaient de plus près à sa féconde imagination les situations *romantiques* du pays bien-aimé de son enfance, et lui remettaient sous les yeux les heureux rivages de *Vevai*, et les rochers amoureux de *Meillerie*. Un jour il découvrit, dans un lieu que nous appelons *le monument des anciennes amours*, une cabane pratiquée dans le roc, avec quelques inscriptions gravées sur des rochers qui s'avancent jusque sur le bord d'un lac dont la situation a quelque ressemblance avec celle du lac de Genève ; je vis tout-à-coup ses yeux se mouiller de larmes, tant son cœur éprouvait d'émotion en ce moment à se retracer le souvenir des délices de son pays, et le bonheur pur de sa jeunesse. Il fut long-temps sans pouvoir retrouver de lui-même cet endroit, parce qu'il l'avait bien plus senti que remarqué. En général, il était toujours trop occupé de songer à autre chose pour penser à son chemin ; il ne voyait que des fleurs, des bois, des prés et des eaux, et oubliait tous les points de la boussole, toutes les heures, et jusqu'à celle de son dîner. Le plus souvent sa

femme était obligée de le chercher, de l'appeler de tous côtés ; mais il prenait tant de plaisir à s'égarer que c'eût été une véritable cruauté de l'en priver à force de soins importuns. Tous les jours, après son dîner, il venait dans ce petit verger, semblable à celui de Clarens, au milieu duquel est la chaumière qu'on arrangeait pour lui. Là il s'asseyait sur un banc de mousse, pour y donner aux poissons et aux oiseaux ce qu'il appelait *le dîner de ses hôtes.* La première fois qu'il entra avec moi dans ce verger, et qu'il y vit des arbres antiques couverts de mousse et de lierre, et formant des guirlandes audessus des gazons, des fleurs et des eaux qui s'étendent sous ces ombrages rustiques : *Ah ! quelle magie,* me dit-il, *dans tous ces vieux troncs entr'ouverts et bizarres que l'on ne manquerait pas d'abattre ailleurs ; et cependant comme cela parle au cœur, sans qu'on sache pourquoi ! Ah ! je le vois, et je le sens jusqu'au fond de mon ame, je trouve ici les jardins de ma Julie !*—Vous n'y serez pas, lui répondis-je, avec elle, ni avec Wolmar, mais pour en être plus tranquille vous n'en serez pas moins heureux. Il me serra la main ; tout fut dit, tout fut entendu. Dès-lors il fut chez lui partout, et il y fut plus le maître que je ne l'étais chez moi ; car il pouvait être seul tant qu'il le voulait. Ce verger, où personne n'entrait que lui et nous, était notre point de réunion tous les jours après-dîner. Lorsqu'il m'était impossible de m'y rendre, je lui envoyais le plus jeune de mes enfants, qu'il avait pris dans une grande affection, et qu'il appelait son *gouverneur :* il allait alors se promener avec lui, lui faisait remarquer et lui apprenait à connaître tout ce qu'il voyait. De son côté le petit bonhomme, plus souple et plus alerte que lui, lui servait à ramasser toutes les plantes qu'il avait envie de cueillir. Ordinairement il venait nous retrouver le soir, lorsque nous nous promenions sur l'eau, et il se plaisait tellement à ramer, que nous l'appelions notre *amiral d'eau douce.* Dans le calme de la soirée, où la musique champêtre a tant de charmes, il aimait à entendre, sous les arbres voisins

des rivières, le son de nos clarinettes. Cette mélodie, bien plus touchante encore lorsqu'elle est placée sur le théâtre même de la nature, lui rendit bientôt le goût de la musique, à laquelle le tintamare actuellement à la mode l'avait fait renoncer. Déjà il avait composé quelques airs pour nos petits concerts de famille, et il avait repris la résolution d'achever cet hiver différents morceaux de sa musique : musique charmante qui, dictée comme tous ses autres ouvrages par le sentiment même, est encore plus faite pour le cœur que pour l'oreille, et doit être chantée bien plus avec l'ame qu'avec la voix. Ma fille ainée, qui jusque-là n'avait vu dans la musique qu'un art difficile, hérissé de croches et de mots barbares, voyant, lorsqu'il chantait la sienne sans voix et pourtant de la manière la plus touchante, que la musique pouvait effectivement devenir d'autant plus intéressante qu'on y mettait moins de mots et plus d'idées, plus de goût et moins de bruit, parut désirer alors d'apprendre à chanter ; il s'offrit de lui-même pour lui enseigner son secret, qui consistait, disait-il, à bien comprendre la langue de la musique, et surtout à ne pas plus forcer sa voix en chantant qu'en parlant, parce que le moyen le plus sûr pour se faire écouter, c'est de parler bas et de parler bien. Je ne reçus point d'abord cette offre, dans la crainte de la peine que cela devait lui donner ; mais il insista de manière qu'il me devint impossible de m'y opposer ; *trop heureux*, s'écria-t-il avec transport, *de trouver enfin une occasion de témoigner sa reconnaissance.*

" Faire tous les jours à peu près la même chose, ne mesurer le temps que par une succession d'heures heureuses et non diversifiées, n'avoir que des amusements doux, sans aucune de ces secousses que donnent les grandes peines ou les grands plaisirs, aurait pu paraître un genre de vie trop monotone pour des cœurs vides et des imaginations froides, incapables de sentir le vrai bonheur ; mais un solitaire tel que lui, dont le cœur était en paix, l'ame pure ; dont le mouvement venait bien moins du dehors que du dedans ; dont le repos ne

consistait pas à ne rien faire, mais à n'avoir rien à faire, il n'était besoin que du moindre concours des beautés de la nature pour exciter, exalter son génie, pour le transporter sur les ailes de l'imagination au-delà même de notre atmosphère, et lui faire trouver dans la beauté de ce qu'il voyait la perfection de ce qu'il imaginait. C'est parce qu'il écrivait de grandes choses, qu'il lui fallait de grandes impressions. Tout concourait ici à exciter en lui le besoin de se communiquer ses idées. S'il eût seulement vécu dix ans de plus, l'univers eût sans doute hérité d'une bien riche succession, mais il n'aurait jamais rien publié de son vivant car il s'était fait, avec raison, un principe invariable de ne plus se remettre sur la scène du monde ; et son désir était qu'on pût l'oublier et le laisser en paix. C'était assurément un désir bien modeste et bien simple ; et cependant, par un effet de cette cruelle fatalité qui s'attache à la célébrité, ou plutôt par une suite de cette vile persécution à laquelle s'étaient acharnés tous les partis,[1] contre un homme qui n'avait jamais voulu être d'aucun, et qui était au-dessus de tous, à peine était-il arrivé ici, que toutes sortes de bruits absurdes se répandaient à Paris. J'appris qu'on y débitait de toutes parts que les mémoires de sa vie paraissaient. Craignant alors qu'il ne les eût remis à quelqu'un d'assez infame pour trahir la confiance de l'amitié, je fus alarmé du chagrin que pourrait lui causer cette nouvelle, surtout s'il venait à l'apprendre de quelque bouche indiscrète, peu accoutumée à ménager la sensibilité ; c'est pourquoi je me déterminai à lui en parler moi-même le premier ; mais il ne me parut point du tout affecté de cette nouvelle ; il me dit que s'il eût été assez heureux pour pouvoir passer dans l'obscurité et dans la paix le reste de sa vie, comme il en avait passé les commencements, et que si la

[1] It is evident that this well-informed contemporary did not regard Rousseau's persecutors as the phantom of his diseased imagination. This account also confirms his own statement that two years before his death he had emancipated himself from the bondage to opinions ; and that his enemies had no longer the power to trouble him.

seconde partie de ses jours, depuis que les circonstances l'avaient jeté dans Paris, et que la funeste passion d'écrire l'avait environné de tourments de toute espèce, ne lui eût pas fait une malheureuse obligation de justifier, dans le cas où il passerait à la postérité, un nom qu'on avait cherché à noircir pendant sa vie, il n'eût jamais songé à en écrire l'histoire; mais qu'étant sans cesse accusé, sans savoir de quoi, ni par qui, il avait été forcé de laisser une pièce authentique dans laquelle la postérité pourrait lire jusqu'au fond de son ame, et le juger du moins en connaissance de cause, sur ce qu'il pouvait avoir eu de bon et de mauvais; que pour cet effet ayant été nécessairement obligé, dans la relation véridique des faits, en parlant de lui sans aucune réserve, de parler également de plusieurs personnes suivant le rapport qu'elles avaient eu avec lui, son intention était qu'en tout état de cause ses mémoires ne parussent jamais que long-temps après sa mort et celle de toutes les personnes intéressées; et que pour s'assurer que cette intention fût exactement remplie, il avait remis l'unique exemplaire de son écrit en pays étranger, dans des mains sur lesquelles il croyait devoir compter; que par conséquent l'ouvrage dont on parlait à Paris, ou n'existait pas, ou n'était pas de lui; ce qui ne manquerait pas d'être reconnu dans un autre temps. Cette extrême tranquillité de sa part m'eût étonné, mais il était rendu à lui même;[1] son caractère naturel était la gaieté, l'humanité et la tendresse; il fallait que l'orage fût tout près de lui, lorsqu'il parvenait à bouleverser son ame; mais lorsqu'il se retrouvait avec de bonnes gens, il reprenait toute sa bonhomie naturelle; point philosophe, bon homme, *point d'esprit tout-à-l'heure.* Ici il n'était occupé du matin jusqu'au soir que d'amusements doux; il ne recevait aucunes lettres, n'avait aucune affaire; son unique exercice était de ramasser des fleurs, de

[1] Compare this with Rousseau's own statement in the supplement to the *Dialogues*, entitled "Histoire du précédent Ecrit."—See p. 343, vol. ii.

rêver dans les bocages, de voguer sur les eaux, d'errer dans les bois ; il savourait tout à loisir sa chére nature, qu'il adorait ; s'il n'était pas aimé par une seule personne autant qu'il aurait voulu l'être, parce que chacun de nous avait d'autres liens, il l'était par tous ensemble autant qu'il méritait, et par aucun comme il n'eût pas voulu l'être ; il avait de sa liberté plénière un sûr garant, c'est que nous le désirions toujours et ne le cherchions jamais, parce que c'était pour nous un plaisir de le voir. C'était uniquement pour lui seul que nous l'aimions. C'était l'excellence de son cœur qui s'était toujours fait sentir à moi dans ses écrits, comme dans ses discours, qui avait entraîné le mien vers lui, par une attraction toute puissante. Si le souvenir amer de l'injustice des hommes ne lui permettait pas de compter sur un bonheur permanent, du moins je suis assuré qu'il jouissait du loisir, et commençait à retrouver le repos de jour en jour ; sa physionomie se déridait, il revenait sensiblement à lui-même, à son état naturel, qui était d'aimer tout le monde et de chercher à répandre sans cesse son cœur autour de lui par des actes de bienfaisance et de charité ; il avait déjà si bien repris sa gaieté, franche et naïve comme celle de l'enfance, que souvent sur le grand banc de gazon du verger, il nous faisait tous rire, petits et grands, par ses *contes à la suisse*. S'il était content du calme qu'il commençait à retrouver, nous l'étions réciproquement de sa tranquillité ; il l'avait payée de peines si poignantes, d'atteintes si aiguës, qu'il eût été bien juste qu'il eût pu jouir plus long-temps de ce faible dédommagement de toutes les cruelles tortures qu'on avait eu la barbarie de faire essuyer à cet homme trop sensible ! Mais hélas ! madame, faut-il donc que le bonheur ne soit dans la vie que le rêve de quelques instants, et qu'il n'y ait que le malheur de réel et de durable ! Que ne puis-je m'arrêter ici, en ne vous parlant que de ce qu'il était ! La tâche que vous m'avez imposée n'eût été qu'une consolation ; mais hélas ! il faut que je vous dise à présent comment

il n'est plus ; et c'est ici que commence véritablement la peine que j'éprouve à satisfaire votre curiosité.

"Le mercredi 1er juillet il se promena l'après dîner, comme de coutume, avec son petit gouverneur ; il faisait fort chaud ; il s'arrêta plusieurs fois pour se reposer, ce qui ne lui était pas ordinaire, et se plaignit, à ce que l'enfant nous a dit depuis, de quelques douleurs de colique, mais elles s'étaient dissipées lorsqu'il revint souper, et sa femme n'imagina même pas qu'il fût incommodé. Le lendemain matin, il se leva comme à son ordinaire, alla se promener au soleil levant, autour de la maison, et revint prendre son café au lait avec sa femme : quelque temps après, au moment où elle sortait journellement pour les soins du ménage, il lui recommanda de payer en passant un serrurier qui venait de travailler pour lui, et surtout de ne lui rien rabattre sur son mémoire, parce que cet ouvrier paraissait un honnête homme : tant il a conservé jusqu'au dernier instant le sentiment de l'ordre et de la justice ! A peine sa femme avait-elle été dehors pendant quelques instants, que, venant à rentrer, elle trouve son mari sur une grande chaise de paille, le coude appuyé sur une commode.—Qu'avez-vous, dit-elle, mon bon ami, vous trouvez-vous incommodé ?—Je sens, répondit-il, de grandes anxiétés, et des douleurs de colique.—Alors sa femme, afin d'avoir du secours sans l'inquiéter, feignit de chercher quelque chose, et pria le concierge d'aller dire au château que son mari se trouvait mal. Ma femme, avertie la première, y courut aussitôt ; et comme il n'était pas neuf heures du matin, et que ce n'était point une heure à laquelle on eût coutume d'y aller, elle prit le prétexte de lui demander, ainsi qu'à sa femme, si leur repos n'avait point été troublé par le bruit que l'on avait fait la nuit dans le village.—Ah ! madame, lui répondit-il du ton le plus honnête et le plus attendri, je suis bien sensible à toutes vos bontés, mais vous voyez que je souffre, et c'est une gêne ajoutée à la douleur, que celle de souffrir devant le monde ; vous-même, vous n'êtes ni d'une assez bonne

santé, ni d'un caractère à pouvoir supporter la vue de la souffrance. Vous m'obligerez, madame, et pour vous et pour moi, si vous voulez vous retirer et me laisser avec ma femme pendant quelque temps. Elle se retira presque aussitôt. Dès qu'il fut seul avec sa femme, il lui dit de venir s'asseoir à côté de lui.—Vous êtes obéi, lui dit-elle, mon bon ami ; me voilà : comment vous trouvez-vous ?—Mes douleurs de colique sont bien vives ; mais je vous prie, ma chère amie, d'ouvrir les fenêtres, que je voie encore une fois la verdure. Comme elle est belle !—Mon bon ami, lui dit sa pauvre femme, pourquoi me dites vous cela ?—Ma chère femme, lui répondit-il avec une grande tranquillité, j'ai toujours demandé à Dieu de mourir sans maladie et sans médecin, et que vous puissiez me fermer les yeux. Mes vœux vont être exaucés. Si je vous donnai des peines, si, en vous attachant à mon sort, je vous ai causé des malheurs que vous n'auriez jamais connus sans moi, je vous en demande pardon.—Ah ! c'est à moi, mon bon ami, s'écria-t-elle en pleurant, c'est bien plutôt à moi de vous demander pardon de toutes les inquiétudes et les embarras que je vous ai causés ; mais pourquoi donc me dites-vous tout cela ?—Écoutez-moi, lui dit-il, ma chère femme, je sens que je me meurs, mais je meurs tranquille ; je n'ai jamais voulu de mal à personne et je dois compter sur la miséricorde de Dieu. Mes amis m'ont promis de ne jamais disposer, sans votre aveu, d'aucun des papiers que je leur ai remis. M. de Girardin voudra bien réclamer leur parole : vous remercierez M. et Madame de Girardin de ma part. Je vous laisse entre leurs mains, et je compte assez sur leur amitié pour emporter avec moi la douce certitude qu'ils voudront bien vous servir de père et de mère. Dites-leur que je les prie de permettre que je sois enterré dans leur jardin. Vous donnerez mon *souvenir* à mon petit gouverneur ; vous donnerez aux pauvres du village, pour qu'ils prient pour moi, et à ces bonnes gens dont j'avais arrangé le mariage, le présent de noces que je comptais leur faire. Je vous charge en

outre expressément de faire ouvrir mon corps, après ma mort, par des gens de l'art, et d'en faire dresser un procès verbal.

"Cependant ses douleurs augmentaient, il se plaignait de picotements aigus dans la poitrine, et de violentes secousses dans la tête. Sa malheureuse femme se désolait de plus en plus. Ce fut alors que, voyant son désespoir, il oublia ses propres souffrances pour ne s'occuper que de la consoler.—Eh! quoi, lui dit-il, ma chère amie, vous ne m'aimez donc plus, puisque vous pleurez mon bonheur? Bonheur éternel, qu'il ne sera plus au pouvoir des hommes de troubler! Voyez comme le ciel est pur, en le lui montrant avec un transport qui rassemblait toute l'énergie de son ame; il n'y a pas un seul nuage, ne voyez-vous pas que la porte m'en est ouverte, et que Dieu m'attend? . . . .

"A ces mots, il est tombé sur la tête en entraînant sa femme avec lui: elle veut le relever, elle le trouve sans parole et sans mouvement; elle jette des cris; on accourt, on le relève, on le met sur son lit; je m'approche, je lui prends la main; je lui trouve un reste de chaleur, je crois sentir une espèce de mouvement. La rapidité de ce cruel évènement qui s'était passé dans moins d'un quart d'heure me laisse encore une lueur d'espérance; j'envoie chez le chirurgien voisin; j'envoie à Paris chez un médecin de ses amis pour l'amener sur-le-champ; je me hâte d'aller chercher de l'alkali-fluor; je lui en fais respirer, avaler à différentes reprises: soins superflus! Hélas! cette mort si douce pour lui, et si fatale pour nous, cette perte irréparable était déjà consommée; et si son exemple m'a appris à mourir, il ne m'a pas appris à me consoler de sa mort. J'ai voulu du moins conserver à la postérité les traits de cet homme immortel. M. Houdon, fameux sculpteur, que j'ai envoyé avertir, est venu promptement mouler l'empreinte de son buste; et j'espère qu'il sera ressemblant, car pendant deux jours qu'il est resté sur son lit, son visage a toujours conservé toute la sérénité de son ame; on eût dit qu'il ne faisait

que dormir en paix, du sommeil de l'homme juste. Sa malheureuse femme ne cessait de l'embrasser comme s'il eût été encore vivant, sans qu'il fût possible de lui arracher cette douloureuse et dernière consolation. Ce n'est que le lendemain au soir que son corps, ainsi qu'il avait exigé, a été ouvert en présence de deux médecins et de trois chirurgiens. Le procès verbal qui en a été fait atteste que toutes les parties en étaient parfaitement saines, et que l'on n'a trouvé d'autre cause de sa mort qu'un épanchement de sérosité sanguinolente sur le cerveau : tant la mort peut frapper promptement la tête même la plus sublime ! . . . .

" Je l'ai fait embaumer et renfermer dans un cercueil du bois le plus dur, recouvert de plomb en dedans et en dehors, avec plusieurs médailles qui contiennent son nom et la date de son âge et de sa mort. J'ai prié un Génevois de ses amis de venir ici, afin que toutes les formes génevoises puissent être observés exactement, et le samedi 4 juillet, nous l'avons porté dans l'ile des Peupliers, où on lui a érigé sur-le-champ un tombeau avec cette inscription que j'ai osé y mettre, comme étant dictée par le premier mouvement de mon cœur.

> ' Ici, sous ces ombres paisibles,
> Pour les restes mortels de *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*,
> L'amitié posa ce tombeau :
> Mais c'est dans tous les cœurs sensibles
> Que cet homme divin, qui fut tout sentiment,
> Doit trouver de son cœur l'éternel monument.' "

Notwithstanding this authoritative refutation, the editor of the *Correspondance Littéraire* still contrived by the circulation of different reports, to keep the rumour afloat that Rousseau had committed suicide. In 1789 this theory was adopted by Madame de Stäel : and contradicted by the Countess de Vassy, the daughter of the Count René de Girardin. In 1824, Musset Pathay, the most conscientious as well as the most sympathetic of Rousseau's biographers, lent this doctrine his support, upon the strength of an affirmation

said to have been made by the sculptor Houdon, that the wound upon the temple had the appearance of a pistol-shot. Houdon, still living when Musset-Pathay's book appeared, denied that he had ever made this statement; but then Musset-Pathay insisted that Houdon's extreme old age had impaired his memory. But the positive denial of the story that Jean Jacques had destroyed himself was given by the Count Stanislas de Girardin, the son of René de Girardin, who had as a child been the companion of Rousseau's rambles. It is from the *Lettre de Stanislas Girardin à M. Musset-Pathay* that the documents reproduced in this criticism have been taken. It may be said that, without believing Stanislas de Girardin and his sister, the Countess de Vassy, as well as their father, Count René de Girardin, deliberate fabricators of false evidence, it is impossible to find any justification, either in Rousseau's circumstances or in his state of mind, in July 1778, for the theory that he destroyed himself.

Here, it might have been thought, the discussion would have ended. But no! The rumour of his suicide concluded too satisfactorily the legend of the double-natured Rousseau—half impostor, half maniac. The testimony of the Count de Girardin was put on one side as that of a witness who, if even he had known that his guest had committed suicide, was bound to conceal it. As for the *procès-verbal*, against the assertions of the doctors was urged the alleged affirmation of the sculptor Houdon about the fractured wound over the temple, indicating a pistol-shot. The position taken up by modern psychological critics, predisposed to lend attention to any theory about Rousseau indicative of insanity, is one of doubt. It was summed up by Mr. John Morley in 1873, and reasserted in 1886. To accept this position it is necessary to suppose the Doctor le Bègue de Presle, the surgeons who signed the *procès-verbal*, as well as the Count de Girardin and all his family, guilty not merely of concealing

the truth, but of fabricating unnecessarily elaborate falsehoods.

"A dense cloud of obscure misery," affirms Mr. Morley, "hangs over the last months of this forlorn existence. No tragedy ever had a fifth act more squalid. . . . One day, 2 July 1778, suddenly, and without a single warning symptom, all drew to an end. The sensations which had been the ruling part of his life (!) were affected by pleasure and pain no more, the dusky phantoms all vanished into space. The surgeons reported that the cause of his death was apoplexy; but a suspicion has haunted the world ever since that he destroyed himself by a pistol-shot. . . . *We cannot tell. There is no inherent improbability in the fact of his having committed suicide.*" (Vol. ii. chap. vii. pp. 326, 327.)

But here, once again, the critical method which decides that (the facts having become ghostly to us) we may base our opinions upon the assumption that there is no inherent improbability in any suspicion that points to an unbalanced mind in Rousseau, was destined to be proved a method which leads to wrong conclusions. On the 18th Dec. 1897, a commission of French *savants* and men of letters, under the presidency of M. Berthelot, senator and member of the French Academy, undertook to settle this question once and for ever, by the methods of inquiry and of verification of evidence which leave no room for a war of arguments. The coffins of Voltaire and of Rousseau, consigned at the time of the Restoration to the vaults beneath the Panthéon, were opened; with the primary purpose of setting at rest the mischievous legend that they had been profaned; and that the remains of these two great men had been scattered to the winds. Both coffins were proved to have remained inviolate. M. Berthelot has published a report of the proceedings in a work entitled *Science et Education* (pages 321 to 329). On the 23rd Jan. 1905, he made this statement, in reply to inquiries addressed to him by the Society of J. J. Rousseau of Geneva.

"Le cercueil de Rousseau en renfermait deux autres, emboîtés, l'un de chêne, l'autre de plomb;[1] dont aucun n'avait été ouvert depuis l'époque de la sepulture. Il portait en l'inscription :

1778

HIC JACENT JOHANNIS JACOBI ROUSSEAU

Le squelette de Rousseau gisait au fond, dans un bon état de conservation. Le crâne avait été scié en vue de l'autopsie.—J'ai pris les deux morceaux séparés dans mes mains en présence d'une douzaine de personnes et j'ai constaté avec la certitude que présentent mes connaissances anatomiques qu'il ne portait aucune mutilation, perforation, fracture, ou lésion anormale. Il était parfaitement sain."

We can then tell, and are free most positively and certainly to affirm, that Rousseau *did not destroy himself by a pistol-shot.* Here is one other suspicion that must not be allowed to "haunt the world" any longer. But that must be classed with a great many other "suspicions" (proved gratuitous calumnies in the course of this inquiry) as a malicious invention of his enemies.

2.

La Harpe's Calumnies.

1st, that Diderot suggested to Rousseau the side he took when answering the question proposed by the Academy of Dijon; that Rousseau's first intention was to take the opposite view: that the progress of the Arts and Sciences had been favourable to morality.

This story not only made Rousseau indebted to Diderot for his first literary success: it also left him a convicted sophist, who adopted an opinion without believing in it; and afterwards professed it as his fundamental doctrine.

"The author of the *First Discourse,*" wrote La Harpe, "only wished to be eccentric. The discussion his work produced was even more useful to him than the *Dis-*

[1] See p. 340.

course itself, because controversy was his element. Thus this opinion, which at first had not been his, and which he had only embraced to be extraordinary, became his own by force of his efforts to defend it."

Marmontel, on Diderot's authority, tells the same story.

"Here we have an ecstacy eloquently described," observes Marmontel, about Rousseau's own account of his sense of a sudden inspiration beneath the wide-spreading oak tree, where he rested on the road to Vincennes. "Here are the facts in their simplicity, as Diderot related them to me; and as I afterwards related them to Voltaire.

"I was" (it is Diderot who speaks) "a prisoner at Vincennes. Rousseau came to see me there. He had constituted me his Aristarchus, as he has himself said. One day we were walking together, and he told me that the Academy of Dijon had just proposed an interesting discussion which he had a wish to treat. The question to be discussed was: Has the re-establishment of the Arts and Sciences contributed to the purification of morals? 'What side will you take?' I asked him. He replied to me: 'The affirmative side.' 'That is the donkey's bridge,' I said to him; 'all the men of middling talent will take that road, on which you will find only common-places, whilst the opposite side gives philosophy and eloquence a new field of rich and fertile ideas.' 'You are right,' he said, after a moment's reflection; 'I shall follow your advice.'" "Thus, and from this moment," I added, "his rôle and the mask he assumed, were decided upon." "You do not astonish me," said Voltaire; "this man is a pretender from head to foot; he is one in mind and in soul; but let him act by turns the stoic and then the cynic, he will always betray himself; and his mask suffocates him."—*Mem. de Marmontel*, vol. ii. liv. vii. pp. 189, 190.

Diderot had also evidently taken care to instruct his daughter in the same narrative. "Mon père," writes

Madame de Vaudueil, "a donné à Rousseau l'idée de son Discours sur les Arts, qu'il a revu, et peut-être (!) corrigé." He had also recommended the story to Madame d'Epinay, for, amongst the Arsenal notes, one discovers the following directions:

"Put in its proper place the remark of René about his Discourse for the Academy of Dijon. "Which (argument) should one defend? The one which has no common sense."

(Mettre à sa place le propos de René sur son discours sur l'Academie de Dijon: Lequel faut-il défendre? Celui qui n'a pas le sens commun.)

Madame d'Epinay did not find room for this particular "propos de René." If this falsehood needed refutation one might quote, in proof of the fact that Rousseau's mind was made up before he discussed the matter with Diderot, his statement in the *Confessions* that he read to Diderot the "Prosopopée de Fabricius": which he had written in pencil beneath the spreading oak tree where he had rested on his road to Vincennes, *Conf.* part ii. liv. viii. Fabricius laments that Rome, proud of her luxury and splendour, has forgotten that she was once proud only of her austerity and virtue.

2. La Harpe, in his second libel, attempted to lend weight to Grimm's assertion that Rousseau was disposed to hate men of letters who had obtained recognition before himself, by the humiliations he underwent when he was employed by the Dupins.

"Il n'oublia pas," wrote La Harpe in October 1778, "que, lorsqu'il était commis chez Monsieur Dupin, il ne dînait pas à table le jour que les gens de lettres s'y rassemblaient."

We have the original version of this falsehood in Grimm's *Correspondance Littéraire*, 1767.

"M Dupin, ancien fermier-général, vient de mourir dans un âge avancé," wrote Grimm. "Il laisse une veuve, célèbre jadis par sa beauté; elle avait aussi des prétentions au bel esprit. Elle avait pris Jean Jacques

Rousseau pour son secrétaire ; et je crois que les ouvrages que *ce petit secrétaire* écrivait sous la dictée de Madame Dupin ne valaient pas tout à fait ceux qu'il a composé depuis lui-même. Une anecdote des plus curieuses c'est que Madame Dupin donnait une fois par semaine à dîner à Fontenelle, Marivaux, Mairan, et autres gens d'esprit ; et que ce jour-là Rousseau avait son congé tant on était éloigné de se douter de ce qu'il était."

Here is another "curious anecdote" which, like the anecdote about Diderot's counsels, and the story illustrating the unusual penetration of Diderot's wife, might henceforth be eliminated from serious works about Rousseau. The falseness of this particular "anecdote" stands revealed in the fact that Fontenelle, Marivaux and Mairan are amongst the men of letters mentioned by Rousseau, with whom he made acquaintance at the time when his Dissertation on a new method of musical annotation was read before the Academy of Sciences (1742). He became Madame Dupin's secretary only in 1747, that is to say, after he had been on friendly terms with her for five years, and a condition that he made before accepting these duties was, that M. de Francueil should employ his influence to obtain a rehearsal of his opera, *Les Muses Galantes*, by the company of the opera.—*Confessions*, part ii. liv. vii. A secretary who, before accepting the post, dictates such terms to his employers, is not a man degraded, or embittered by disdainful treatment at their hands, nor one whom they would esteem unfit to mix with men of letters. See vol. i. p. 108.

3. La Harpe's method of intimating that Rousseau was not the author of the music of the *Devin du Village* skilfully avoids making any direct charge in connection with the supposed wrong done the real author of the opera.

"Il donnait," wrote the editor of the *Mercure*, "le *Devin du Village* petit drame plein de grâce et de mélodie, qui eut un succès prodigieux. On a remarqué que le charme de cet ouvrage naissait surtout de l'accord

le plus parfait entre les paroles et la musique, accord qui semblerait ne pouvoir se trouver au même degré que dans un auteur qui, comme Rousseau, aurait conçu à la fois les vers et les chants.

" Mais ceux qui savent que le fameux duo de Silvain n'est pourtant qu'une parodie, et que le poëte travailla sur des notes, concluront qu'il est possible que le poëte et le musicien n'aient qu'une même ame sans être réunis dans la même personne."

Grétry, the composer, wrote to the *Journal de Paris* to protest against this base insinuation, and for the time being La Harpe let the matter drop. In 1780, however, the accusation of having appropriated the work of one Grauet of Lyons, was definitely brought against Rousseau by Pierre Rousseau, in the *Journal Encyclopédique*. I have given the complete history of this libel in my *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, chapter *Devin du Village*.

La Harpe's attack upon Rousseau was answered by Corancez in the *Journal de Paris*, 1st November 1778 ; and by Madame de la Tour de Franqueville in the *Année Littéraire*, 15th November 1778.

3.

Diderot's *Essay upon Seneca*, with the violent note against Rousseau, appeared in December 1778.

The falsehoods in connection with Rousseau's alleged " ingratitude to,"and " betrayal of " his " old friends," require no answer ; nor do the assertions that he attempted to be reconciled with Diderot, that Diderot advised him as to the side he was to take in the discussion suggested by the Academy of Dijon, that the solitude of woods ruined his morals, require refutation. As for the long list of contradictions between the conduct and professions of this alleged sophist, we know that we are dealing with the original author of the plan for creating a false reputation for the prophet of sincerity and simplicity by painting him as an " artificial scoundrel."

Diderot's note kindled widespread indignation. Dorat answered it in the *Journal de Paris*, 25th January 1779.

"Nous ne finirons pas cet article," he wrote, "sans parler d'une note qui fait la plus forte sensation et qui contribue à donner à cet Essai de la célébrité. On y désigne clairement le vertueux citoyen de Genève, puisqu'il s'agit d'un écrivain qui a laissé des mémoires, ou il ne s'épargne pas lui-même. On le traite 'd'ingrat,' de 'lâche,' 'd'homme atroce,' et 'd'artificieux scélérat,' qui 's'est caché pendant cinquante ans sous le masque le plus épais de l'hypocrisie!' Il pârait que l'auteur craint d'être maltraité dans les mémoires dont il est question. On ne peut expliquer autrement celle violente diatribe. Mais il aurait du prévoir que de telles allégations auraient peine à faire fortune. C'est ce philosophe là lui dira-t-on, qui a véritablement supporté la pauvreté avec courage : c'est lui qui l' a preférée à des bienfaits qui lui semblaient déshonorants,—qui ayant à peine le nécessaire a trouvé le moyen d'être utile à ses semblables. C'est ce philosophe qui a rendu à l'enfance le lait maternel, qui l'a débarrassé des entraves destinés à la défigurer—qui a été vraiment éloquent: qui a su peindre la vertu et la faire aimer. Si l'excès de sa sensibilité l'a égaré quelquefois, ses écrits suffiront pour prouver son honnêteté. Un 'scélérat' peut être un bel esprit : mais un scélérat ne parle pas de la vertu comme J. J. Rousseau. Plaisante 'hypocrisie'! plaisante adresse que celle qui aboutit à l'indigence, au malheur et à de si cruelles persécutions. L'auteur de *l'Essai sur la vie de Sénèque* a voulu qu'il ne manquât à son livre aucune espèce de bizarrerie ; ce n'était pas assez de témoigner la plus fougueuse tendresse pour un rhéteur mort depuis deux mille ans ; il fallait qu'il déchirât la mémoire du plus éloquent de nos écrivains, d'un philosophe presqu' encore vivant au milieu de nous, et dont l'inflexible probité aussi reconnu que ses talents, sera long-temps l'objet de la vénération universelle."

Diderot's "note" was indignantly condemned by a crowd of writers; in the *Année Littéraire* by Madame de la Tour de Franqueville and by Deleyre; by De Longueville in the *Mercure*; by Bègue de Presle in the *Journal de Paris;* and even by Pierre Rousseau in the *Journal Encyclopédique.* It was apologized for rather than justified by Diderot's admirers. As for the impression it produced on the general public, one can discover what it was by the complaints made by the Encyclopædists, that critics of Rousseau were "persecuted." "Les étrangers ont dit," writes Naigeon, Diderot's editor, "que M. Rousseau avait fait *secte* parmi nous; ils auraient pu ajouter que cette secte si aveuglement dévouée et soumise à son chef, est plutôt religieuse que philosophique. En effet, il n'y a guère que des opinions religieuses, mal entendues, et portées à l'excès, qui puissent inspirer cet esprit d'intolerance dont tous les partisans du citoyen de Genève sont plus ou moins animés. Quiconque ose avoir sur ses écrits, et sur sa personne, un sentiment contraire au leur s'expose infailliblement à une espèce de persécution, qui a tous les effets de la haine théologique."

Here, there is certainly some exaggeration; one never heard of the martyrdom of any Encyclopædist; nor even that the admirers of Rousseau excited the populace to stone his calumniators. But we may accept their own testimony that the behaviour of these "honest men" in attacking the memory of their "old friend," immediately death had made it impossible for him to reply, did not command the admiration of their contemporaries. Here is La Harpe's complaint in the same strain, uttered in the *Mercure,* Oct. 1792: "Il faut d'abord avouer que depuis la mort de Rousseau il s'est déclaré en sa faveur une sorte de fanaticisme poussé jusqu'à l'intolerance. On eut dit qu'il n'était pas permis d'attaquer une de ses opinions, ni de lui trouver un tort, ni de mettre la moindre restriction dans les louanges qu'il avait mérités."

4.

D'Alembert's false charge made against Rousseau—of ingratitude to Lord-Marshal Keith.

In Feb. 1779, d'Alembert published his *Eloge de George Keith, Grand Maréchal d'Écosse.* There seemed no special reason why this *Eloge* should ever have been delivered. Lord-Marshal Keith was an excellent, but in no sense a famous man; d'Alembert had no intimate acquaintance with him; the French nation had no reasons to feel any lively interest in his career; and, in short, no motive can be discovered for the choice of this subject, except the opportunity it afforded the secretary of the Academy to insert an offensive and a false charge against Rousseau. After enlarging upon the fact that Lord-Marshal Keith not only protected Rousseau, but accorded him a pension, d'Alembert continues:—

"La vérité nous oblige de dire, et ce n'est pas sans un regret sincère, que le bienfaiteur eut depuis fort à se plaindre de celui qu'il avait si noblement, et si promptement, obligé. Mais la mort du coupable (!) et les justes raisons que nous avons eues nous-même de nous en plaindre, nous obligent de tirer le rideau sur ce détail affligeant, dont les preuves sont malheureusement consignées dans des lettres authentiques. Ces preuves n'ont été connues que depuis la mort de Milord Maréchal. Il gardait toujours le silence sur les torts qu'on avait avec lui; et son cœur indulgent ne lui permit jamais la médisance ni même la plainte. . . . . Une personne très estimable, que Milord honorait avec justice, de son amitié, et de sa confiance, nous a écrit ses propres paroles 'Milord m'avait donné sa correspondance avec Rousseau, en me recommandant de ne l'ouvrir qu'après sa mort. Je dois rendre cette justice à sa mémoire que malgré les justes sujets de plainte qu'il avait contre Rousseau jamais je ne lui ai entendu dire un mot qui fut à son désavantage: il me montra seulement la

dernière lettre qu'il en reçut, et me conta historiquement l'affaire de la pension.' '*Cette lettre,*' ajoute la même personne '*était remplie d'injures.* 'Il faut,' dit le bon Milord, en la recevant, 'pardonner ces écarts d'un homme que le malheur rend injuste; et qu'on doit regarder et traiter comme un malade.' *Aussi pardonna-t-il si bien à M. Rousseau que par son testament il lui légua sa montre qu'il portait toujours. Elle a éte envoyée à sa veuve.*"

To bequeath the "watch he always wore" to a man who had repaid his benefits with ingratitude and insults, would have been an unintelligible action, but it becomes not only intelligible, but touching and full of affection, as an appeal for pardon, when one recollects the true circumstances: viz. the withdrawal of the old man, of eighty-two years of age, from a painful position, where he saw himself compelled to decide between David Hume and Jean Jacques (to both of whom he was warmly attached) in a quarrel where, to his mind, both his friends were wrong-headed, and to blame. The circumstances will be fully stated (see vol. ii. p. 231), but it will be useful to reproduce here the documents which establish the absolute falsity of d'Alembert's charges: that Rousseau wrote an insulting letter to Lord-Marshal, or was ever ungrateful to him; that Lord-Marshal ever accused Rousseau of insolence or ingratitude; or excused him from these offences, on the grounds that he was "malade," in other words, "mad."

We owe the production of these documents in 1779 to Madame de la Tour de Franqueville. They were published in a long letter from her, printed in the *Année Littéraire,* 20 May 1779, under the title of *Lettre d'une anonyme à un anonyme ou Procès de l'esprit et du cœur de M. d'Alembert,* reproduced with other important articles and letters consecrated to the refutation of Rousseau's calumniators in the 28th volume of the edition of his works published in 1793. Later biographers, and editors of Rousseau's works, have decided that it was "superfluous" to inquire into the

value of Madame de la Tour's testimony, because, by her enthusiasm for Rousseau, she is proved to have been a "fanatic." As a matter of fact, this "fanatic" represents the chief person amongst Rousseau's contemporaries, who hunted up historical documents, and who established by the evidence of indisputable and undisputed facts the fabulous character of the charges made against him, rejected by his other devoted admirers in this epoch, as too outrageous to deserve serious consideration: just as later on they were to be accepted because there was no "inherent improbability" in any charge that went to prove Jean Jacques an impostor, or insane, or ungrateful to his benefactors. Madame de la Tour writes:—"Révoltée de toutes les faussetés que M. d' Alembert accumule dans son *éloge* du maréchal d'Ecosse, pressée par le besoin de les détruire, j'ai écrit au plus digne ami du maréchal et de J. J. Rousseau pour lui demander des lumières que ma position ne m'avoit pas permis d'acquérir par moi-même: non que j'aie eu le malheur de balancer un instant entre Jean-Jacques et son détracteur, mais parceque l'ardeur de servir, toujours subordonnée à l'amour de la justice, bien différente enfin de l'ardeur de nuire, n'avance rien dont elle ne veuille administrer la preuve. Cet ami, d'une espèce trop rare pour le bonheur de la société, est M. du Peyrou, dont le nom seul fait pâlir les fauteurs de la calomnie, tant il annonce de candeur et de probité. Il a daigné favoriser mon projet; il m'a fait une réponse où la justesse de son esprit, la pureté de ses intentions, la beauté de son ame, se développent avec un égal avantage. Il a bien voulu m'envoyer des extraits de lettres, tant du lord Keith que de Jean-Jacques, qui donnent le démenti le plus formel aux scandaleuses assertions de M. d'Alembert, et rectifient les idées que fait naître celle qui est la moins téméraire. A l'abri de la réputation de M. du Peyrou, monsieur, la fidélité de ces extraits est inattaquable; aucun de ceux qui le connoissent n'osera les suspecter. Je vais vous transcrire ces pièces intéressantes; observez-en s'il vous plaît les dates.

RÉPONSE DE M. DUPEYROU.

"*Neuchâtel*, 9 *mai*, 1779.

"Depuis vendredi matin, moment de la réception de votre lettre du 3 de ce mois, je n'ai cessé, madame, de m'occuper des éclaircissemens que vous desirez de moi. Mon état de foiblesse, qui ne me permet pas encore de quitter le lit, n'a pu ralentir mon zèle. La nature des questions que vous m'adressez intéresse mon cœur autant que le vôtre. Je vois que vous êtes indignée comme moi de l'*imputation calomnieuse contre* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, dont M. d'Alembert a osé profaner l'*éloge* prétendu d'un homme digne en effet de tous les éloges, mais au-dessus de ceux que M. d'Alembert peut lui donner. J'ignore si M. d'Alembert a, dans son *éloge*, étayé son accusation contre Jean-Jacques de quelques témoignages plus probans que le sien ; ou s'il s'est flatté que sa simple assertion auroit en Europe le même poids qu'elle peut avoir dans quelques cercles de Paris ; je sais seulement que M. d'Alembert, avant de publier son *éloge*, avoit dans des conversations de société cherché à accréditer son accusation contre Rousseau en s'étayant d'un secrétaire de lord maréchal. Or ce secrétaire ne peut être que le sieur Junod, mort depuis quelques années. Sans doute que M. d'Alembert ne cite le témoignage *d'un mort contre un mort*, qu'appuyé de preuves par écrit ou incontestables. En attendant qu'il les produise, comme il y est appelé par l'honneur, s'il en a encore un germe, je vais, madame, mettre sous vos yeux les éclaircissemens que vous me demandez, ceux du moins que je me suis mis en état de vous fournir aujourd'hui. J'ai compulsé une centaine de lettres, toutes originales, écrites de la main de milord maréchal, dont les deux tiers adressées a Jean-Jacques, depuis juillet 1762 à octobre 1765, époque du départ de celui-ci pour passer en Angleterre. Les autres me sont adressées depuis juin 1765 à juin 1767. Vous ne recevrez

cet ordinaire que les extraits de quelques unes des premières, qui vous appendront en quel temps et à quelle occasion *la rente viagère de six cents livres fut constituée entre mes mains. Au lieu de cinquante livres sterling que lord marchal avoit destinées à son fils chéri, celui-ci le suppla de borner ce bienfait à la somme ci-dessus de six cents livres.* Les extraits de quelques unes de ces lettres vous feront surement regretter comme à moi que des considérations d'honnêteté ou de convenance ne permettent pas la publication entiere d'une collection si précieuse, si honorable à deux cœurs vertueux et sensibles, tels que ceux de lord maréchal et de Jean-Jacques. Il n'y a pas une de ces lettres qui n'offre des traits intéressans de générosité, de délicatesse, de sensibilité, de bonté, de raison et de vertu; pas une qui ne caractérise par les expressions et par les choses cette tendre et paternelle affection de lord maréchal pour *son fils chéri.* Plusieurs contiennent des anecdotes historiques, qui la plupart prouvent combien étoient vifs et fondés l'attachement, le respect, l'admiration de lord maréchal pour le souverain qui l'honoroit de sa bienveillance et de son amitié. Je ne puis me refuser la satisfaction de vous transcrire ici le morceau suivant, extrait d'une lettre de Jean-Jacques écrite au noble lord le 21 août 1764 : vous jugerez du reste par ce léger échantillon. *Ce que vous m'apprenez de l'affranchissement des paysans de Poméranie, joint à tous les autres traits pareils que vous m'avez ci-devant rapportés, me montre par-tout deux choses également belles, savoir dans l'objet le génie de* Frederic, *et dans le choix le cœur de* George. *On feroit une histoire digne d'immortaliser le roi sans autres mémoires que vos lettres.*

" Parmi ces anecdotes historiques M. d'Alembert *ne se doute pas peut-être qu'il est quelquefois question de lui et qu'avec une façon de penser aussi aisée que la sienne on pourroit le chagriner un peu en rendant le public confident de quelques discours échappés à la liberté*

philosophique dont il jouissoit à Potsdam. Mais l'impunité du méchant n'a qu'un temps, et l'exacte probité est compagne de la justice. Tant que les détracteurs de Jean-Jacques ne s'affichent que comme de vils calomniateurs auprès des gens sensés, on ne leur doit que le mépris. Qu'ils produisent les preuves de leurs odieuses imputations, on leur en promet d'avance une réfutation victorieuse d'un côté, flétrissante de l'autre.

* * * * *

"Non, madame, Jean-Jacques n'a pu donner d'autres chagrins à lord maréchal que sa querelle avec *M. Hume;* et si à cette époque la correspondance du lord s'est ralentie, *elle n'a jamais cessé totalement.* Je sais de Jean-Jacques lui-même qu'il recevoit quelquefois des nouvelles de ce respectable ami : je sais de lord maréchal qu'en ralentissant sa correspondance par des raisons pleines de sagesse et fondées sur son âge, il désiroit et demandoit des nouvelles de son Jean-Jacques. J'ai vu celui-ci à mon passage à Paris, en mai 1775, m'exprimer avec plénitude de cœur les sentimens de tendresse et de vénération pour l'homme qu'*il aimoit et respectoit au-dessus de tous les hommes.* Je l'ai vu *s'attendrir* au récit que je lui faisois des preuves multipliées que j'avois eues à Valence en Espagne du souvenir plein de tendresse et de respect que l'on y conservoit pour la personne et les vertus de cet homme vraiment fait pour inspirer ces sentimens.

"Malheureusement notre ami, avant sa retraite à Ermenonville, a brûlé la majeure partie des papiers qui lui restoient : *il n'a pas dépendu de lui que ce qui étoit entre mes mains n'ait subi le même sort; tant il attachoit peu d'importance aux titres les plus précieux qu'il eût à opposer à la rage de ses calomniateurs!* Ses écrits subsisteront ; c'est son cœur qui les a dictés : la postérité le jugera d'après ces écrits ; et ses lâches ennemis, qui assouvissent sur un cadavre une fureur *trop longtemps contrainte,* seront trop heureux d'échapper par l'oubli à l'exécration qui les attend.

"Je me suis peut-être trop abandonné aux mouvemens de mon cœur. Je n'en désavoue pourtant aucun ; *et vous pouvez, madame, faire de cette lettre et des morceaux qui l'accompagnent et la suivront l'usage que vous jugerez à propos d'en faire. Vous pouvez me nommer sans scrupule ; vous pouvez même assurer que je suis prêt à communiquer à qui le voudra les pieces originales, ou leurs copies authentiques, et défier les accusateurs de Jean-Jacques d'en produire d'équivalentes.*"[1]

EXTRAIT D'UNE LETTRE DE LORD MARÉCHAL D'ECOSSE A M. J. J. ROUSSEAU.

"*Edimbourg*, 6 *mars*, 1764.

"J'ai acheté pour la somme de trente mille guinées une de mes terres. J'ai eu le plaisir de voir le bon cœur de mes compatriotes ; personne ne s'est présenté à l'encan pour acheter, et la salle et la rue retentissoient de battemens de mains quand la terre me fut adjugée. Ceci cependant me jette dans des affaires que je n'entends pas et que je déteste. L'unique profit qui me revient est de pouvoir par le profit que je pourrois retirer de mon achat faire quelque bien à des gens que j'estime et que j'aime. *Mon bon et respectable ami, vous pourriez me faire un grand plaisir en me permettant de donner, soit à présent, ou par testament, cent louis à mademoiselle le Vasseur ;* cela lui feroit une petite rente viagere pour l'aider à vivre. Je n'ai pas de parens proches, personne plus de ma famille ; je ne puis emporter dans l'autre monde mon argent ; mes enfans, Emetulla, Ibrahim, Stepan, Mutcho, sont déja pourvus suffisamment. *J'ai encore un fils chéri, c'est mon bon sauvage ; s'il étoit un peu traitable, il rendroit un grand service à son ami et serviteur.*"

[1] Si vous désapprouviez, monsieur, l'emploi des lettres italiques qui se trouvent dans cette lettre et dans les extraits, ce seroit à moi qu'il faudroit vous en prendre, M. du Peyrou n'en ayant indiqué aucun. (Note de Madame de la Tour.)

RÉPONSE DE J. J. ROUSSEAU DU 31 MARS, 1764.

"Sur l'acquisition, milord, que vous avez faite et sur l'avis que vous m'en avez donné, la meilleure réponse que j'aie à vous faire est de vous transcrire ici ce que j'écris sur ce sujet à la personne que je prie de donner cours à cette lettre, en lui parlant des acclamations de vos compatriotes."

'*Tous les plaisirs ont beau être pour les méchans, en voilà pourtant un que je leur défie de goûter. Milord n'a rien de plus pressé que de me donner avis du changement de sa fortune ; vous devinez aisément pourquoi. Félicitez-moi de tous mes malheurs, madame ; ils m'ont donné pour ami milord maréchal.*'

"Sur vos offres qui regardent Mademoiselle le Vasseur et moi, je commencerai, milord, par vous dire que, loin de mettre de l'amour-propre à me refuser à vos dons, j'en mettrois un très noble à les recevoir. Ainsi là-dessus point de disputes : les preuves que vous vous intéressez à moi, de quelque nature qu'elles puissent être, sont plus propres à m'enorgueillir qu'à m'humilier ; et je ne m'y refuserai jamais, soit dit une fois pour toutes.

"Mais j'ai du pain quant à présent, et, au moyen des arrangemens que je médite, j'en aurai pour le reste de mes jours : que me serviroit le surplus ? *Rien ne me manque de ce que je desire et qu'on peut avoir avec de l'argent.* Milord, il faut préférer ceux qui ont besoin à ceux qui n'ont pas besoin ; et je suis dans ce dernier cas. D'ailleurs je n'aime point qu'on me parle de testament. Je ne voudrois pas être, moi le sachant, dans celui d'un indifférent ; jugez si je voudrois me savoir dans le vôtre.

"Vous savez, milord, que Mademoiselle le Vasseur a une petite pension de mon libraire avec laquelle elle peut vivre quand elle ne m'aura plus. Cependant j'avoue que le bien que vous voulez lui faire m'est plus précieux que s'il me regardoit directement ; et je suis

extrêmement touché de ce moyen trouvé par votre cœur de contenter la bienveillance dont vous m'honorez. Mais s'il se pouvoit que vous lui appliquassiez plutôt la rente de la somme que la somme même, cela m'éviteroit l'embarras de la placer, sorte d'affaire où je n'entends rien."

Dans une lettre adressée à M. Rousseau, datée de Keith-hall le 13 avril 1764, milord, après avoir rendu compte de son plan de vie et d'arrangemens lorsqu'il sera de retour à Berlin, ajoute :

" Ja n'aurai que deux choses à regretter, le soleil de la *bendita Valencia, et mon fils le sauvage.* Dans ma derniere je lui fais une proposition très raisonnable : je ne sais ce qu'il me répondra ; rien qui vaille ; j'ai peur. Bon jour ; je vous embrasse de la plus tendre amitié."

LORD MARÉCHAL EN RÉPONSE A LA LETTRE DE M. ROUSSEAU DU 31 MARS.

" *Londres,* 6 *juin,* 1764.

" Je ne puis vois exprimer le plaisir *que votre indulgence en ma faveur m'a donné; j'en sens vivement la valeur.* Je n'ai que le temps de vous assurer combien je suis votre serviteur et fidèle ami. Je suis comme dans une tempête sur mer, les cours à faire, les visites, les dîners, etc. Je me sauve ; on fait mon coffre ; je pars demain pour Brunswick, et puis pour Berlin, d'où je vous écrirai avec plus de loisir ; en attendant je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur."

EXTRAITS DE LETTRES DE LORD MARÉCHAL A M. J. J. ROUSSEAU.

" *Potsdam, le* 8 *février,* 1765.

" Après avoir discuté sur la cherté des vivres en Angleterre où il étoit déja question pour Rousseau de se retirer, milord ajoute : ' Mon bon ami, si vous n'étiez plus sauvage que les sauvages du Canada, il y auroit

remède. Parmi eux, si j'avois tué plus de gibier que je ne pourrois en manger ni emporter, je dirois au premier passant, Tiens, voilà du gibier. Il l'emporteroit; *mais Jean Jacques le laisseroit:* ainsi j'ai raison de dire qu'il est trop sauvage, etc.' "

"*Potsdam, le* 22 *mai*, 1765.

"Ce qui me fâche est la crainte que l'impression de vos ouvrages à Neuchatel ne se faisant pas, il ne vous manque un secours nécessaire : car item il faut manger, et on ne vit plus de gland dans notre siécle de fer. Vous pourriez me rendre bien plus à l'aise que je ne le suis, et il me semble que vous le devriez. Vous m'appelez votre père, vous êtes homme vrai; ne puis je exiger, par l'autorité que ce titre me donne, *que vous permettiez que je donne à mon fils cinquante livres sterling de rente viagere?* Emetulla est riche, Ibrahim a une petite rente assurée, Stepan de même, Mutcho aussi. Si mon fils chéri avoit quelque chose assuré pour la vie, je n'aurois plus rien à désirer dans ce monde ni aucune inquiétude à le quitter : il ne tient qu' à vous d'ajouter infiniment à mon bonheur. Seriez-vous à l'aise si vous étiez en doute que j'eusse du pain dans mes vieux jours ? Mettez-vous à ma place, faites aux autres comme vous voudriez qu'on vous fît. Ne croyez-vous pas que la liaison d'amitié est plus forte que celle d'une parenté éloignée et souvent chimérique ? moi je le sens bien.

"Je n'ai plus personne de ma famille ; une terre qui j'ai de près de 30,000 liv. de rente, avec une bonne maison toute meublée, va à un parent fort éloigné qui a déja à lui une terre de près de 40,000 liv. de rente. J'ai encore une petite terre à moi, et de l'argent comptant considérablement. *Je voudrois sur ma terre vous assurer cinquante livres sterling;* rien n'est sûr que sur les terres. *Soyez bon, indulgent, généreux; rendez votre ami heureux.* Adieu."

Je croirois, monsieur, faire injure à votre intelligence

si j'entreprenois le rapprochement de ces extraits et des passages de l' *éloge* qu'ils démentent. Il suffit de vous mettre à portée de juger par vous-même quel est le degré de confiance qui est dû à M. d'Alembert sur l'article de la *rente*. En mérite-t-il davantage sur celui des *injures?* C'est sur quoi les extraits suivans vont vous décider.

EXTRAITS DE LETTRES ADRESSÉES A M. DU PEYROU PAR MILORD MARÉCHAL.

"*Potsdam, fin de juillet,* 1766.

"Notre ami Jean-Jacques est résolu de se retirer encore plus du commerce des hommes: il se plaint de David Hume, et David de lui. *J'ai peur que l'un et l'autre n'ait quelque tort; David d'avoir écouté avec trop de complaisance les ennemis de notre ami; et lui peut-être a pris cette indolence de David à ne pas prendre assez vivement son parti comme une association contre lui avec ses ennemis.* J'en suis affligé; car David est si bon homme, et notre ami a tant d'ennemis déja *que bien des gens seront portés à lui donner tort.* Mais comme il est dans la plus grande retraite et qu'il se borne à une correspondance de deux ou trois personnes, le mieux est de ne plus parler de cette nouvelle tracasserie, etc."

"*Du* 19 *septembre,* 1766.

"La malheureuse querelle de notre ami contre M. Hume me donne tous les jours plus de peine: tout le monde en parle. Je ne puis justifier son procédé; tout ce que je puis faire est de justifier son cœur, et de le séparer d'une erreur de son jugement qui a mal interprété les intentions de David. J'ai vu une lettre de d'Alembert là-dessus, qui se plaint aussi: il dit qu'il avoit parlé très favorablement de M. Rousseau ici à la table du roi, ce qui est vrai; *mais je n'assurerois pas qu'il n'avoit pas changé d'avis même avant cette dernière affaire, etc.*"

"*Du* 28 *novembre*, 1756.

"J'ai une lettre de M. Rousseau ; *des plaintes contre moi; avec bien de la douceur*, d'avoir mal interprêté son refus de la pension. L'autre est sur ce que je vous ai écrit. Comme j'écris de mémoire et que la mienne me manque beacoup, je ne sais pas du tout ce que je vous ai dit dans cette lettre dont il est question ; bien sais-je que je ne vous ai écrit que dans l'intention et dans l'espérance que vous pourriez lui ôter ses soupçons contre M. Hume, qui, je voyois, seroient trouvés injustes de tout le monde : j'avois tâché de les lui ôter longtemps avant que la querelle n'éclatât ; et vous pouvez vous même juger si ce que je disois étoit d'un ami ou ennemi. *Je le regarde toujours comme un homme vertueux*, mais aigri par ses malheurs, emporté par sa passion, et qui n'écoute pas assez ses amis. Je ne puis lui donner raison jusqu'à ce qu'il me paroisse l'avoir. Si dans la suite il fait voir des preuves que M. Hume est un noir scélérat, certainement je ne lui donnerai pas raison ; mais jusqu'à cette heure je ne vois pas apparence de preuves *solides*.

"Il est bien affligeant, pour moi sur-tout qui aime la tranquillité et point les tracasseries, d'être quasi forcé d'entrer dans une querelle entre *deux amis que j'estime*. Je crois que je prendrai le parti nécessaire à mon repos de ne plus parler ni écouter rien sur cette malheureuse affaire. Adieu ; je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur.

"Comme je ne me souviens pas de ce que je vous ai écrit, que je n'ai pas copie de mes lettres, examinez-les. M. Rousseau ne me dit ni vos paroles ni celles de ma lettre à vous, que pour bien juger je devois savoir. Voici comme il finit : *Mais si je n'ai pas eu le tort que vous m'imputez, souvenez-vous de grace que le seul ami sur lequel je compte après vous me regarde, sur la foi de votre lettre, comme un extravagant au moins.*

"Je vous envoie copie de ce que je lui écris par ce courier. Bon soir."

LORD MARÉCHAL A M. ROUSSEAU.

Après avoir discuté quelques articles relatifs à des écrits précédens, le lord ajoute :

" Je suis vieux, infirme, trop peu de mémoire. Je ne sais plus ce que j'ai écrit à M. du Peyrou, mais je sais très positivement que je désirois vous servir en assoupissant une querelle sur des soupçons qui me paroissoient mal fondés, et non pas vous ôter un ami. Peut-être ai-je fait quelques sottises : pour les éviter à l'avenir, ne trouvez pas mauvais que j'abrége la correspondance, comme j'ai déja fait avec tout le monde, même avec mes plus proches parens et amis, pour finir mes jours dans la tranquillité. Bon soir.

" Je dis *abréger*, car je désirerai toujours savoir de temps en temps des nouvelles de votre santé et qu'elle soit bonne."

" Eh bien ! monsieur, le ton de milord, en parlant de Jean-Jacques et à Jean-Jacques, est-il celui que prend un bienfaiteur vis-à-vis d'un ingrat à qui il a *des injures à pardonner ? Estime*-t-on un ingrat ? *le regarde*-t-on *comme un homme vertueux ?* s'y intéresse-t-on assez pour *désirer toujours de savoir de temps en temps de ses nouvelles ?* ou plutôt n'y a-t-il pas une noirceur abominable dans les louanges que M. d'Alembert donne au libéral Ecossois, quand il s'agit d'un désintéressé Genevois, sur l'*indulgence qui ne lui permit jamais la médisance ni même la plainte ?* Hélas ! ce fut le protecteur qui en eut besoin d'*indulgence ;* et le protégé s'acquitta envers lui, en lui *pardonnant*, en faveur de la *justice qu'il n'avoit cessé de rendre à son cœur*, l'injustice qu'il lui faisoit en accusant son *jugement d'erreur* et son esprit de prévention. Oui, monsieur, je l'avouerai sans détour[1] (les amis de Jean-Jacques ne combattront jamais une vérité, quelque affligeante qu'elle puisse être,) la

[1] J'ai plus fait, j'en ai fourni la preuve en produisant les trois derniers extraits.

gravité des torts de M. Hume lui en sauva la punition : le digne lord le crut innocent ; aveuglé par la longue habitude de l'estimer, il ne s'apperçut point que les circonstances ne permettoient pas que les torts fussent du côté de Jean-Jacques.[1] Si George Keith avoit eu autant de sagacité que de bonté et de franchise, la seule publication de l'*Exposé succinct* lui auroit décillé les yeux. . . . Mais on doit l'excuser sur la foiblesse attachée à son grand âge, sur l'intérêt personnel qui le portoit à éloigner la cruelle idée d'avoir consommé le malheur de son *fils chéri* en le liant avec son compatriote ; enfin sur ce qu'il en devoit moins coûter à son cœur de plaindre l'*erreur* du sensible Rousseau que de détester la perfidie de l'adroit Hume. D'ailleurs si milord n'a pas eu assez de lumières et d'énergie pour sacrifier David à Jean-Jacques, il n'a pas eu non plus assez d'aveuglement et de mollesse pour sacrifier Jean-Jacques à David, comme on pourroit

[1] C'est ce qu'il rend palpable dans une lettre datée de Wootton le 2 aout 1766, dont j'ai vu l'original. Voici ce qu'il y dit : "Je me bornerai à vous présenter une seule réflexion. Il s'agit de deux hommes, dont l'un a été amené par l'autre an Angleterre presque malgré lui. L'étranger, ignorant la langue du pays, ne pouvant ni parler ni entendre, seul, sans amis, sans appui, sans connoissances, sans savoir même à qui confier une lettre en sureté, livré sans réserve à l'autre et aux siens, malade, retiré, ne voyant personne, écrivant peu, est allé s'enfermer dans le fond d'une retraite, où il herborise pour toute occupation. Le Breton, homme actif, liant, intrigant, au milieu de son pays, de ses amis, de ses parens, de ses patrons, de ses patriotes, en grand crédit à la cour, à la ville, répandu dans le plus grand monde, à la tête des gens de lettres, disposant des papiers publics, en grande rélation chez l'étranger, sur-tout avec les plus mortels ennemis du premier. Dans cette position il se trouve que l'un des deux a tendu des pièges à l'autre. Le Breton crie que c'est cette vile canaille, ce scélérat d'étranger, qui lui en tend. L'étranger, seul, malade, abandonné, gémit et ne répond rien. Là-dessus le voilà jugé. Il demeure clair qu'il s'est laissé mener dans le pays de l'autre, qu'il s'est mis à sa merci tout exprès pour lui faire pièce et pour conspirer contre lui. Que pensez-vous de ce jugement ? Si j'avois été capable de former un projet aussi monstrueusement extravagant, où est l'homme, ayant quelque sens, quelque humanité, qui ne devroit pas dire, Vous faites tort à ce pauvre misérable ; il est trop fou pour pouvoir être un scélérat. Plaignez-le, soignez-le, mais ne l'injuriez pas."

le croire d'après les insidieuses assertions de M. d'Alembert : c'est ce dont les extraits rapportés n'ont pu manquer, monsieur, de vous convaincre. Ils constatent tous ce que j'avois le plus à cœur d'établir, c'est-à-dire que Jean-Jacques n'a jamais mérité de reproches de la part de milord ; et que milord, en ne lui en addressant point, en ne se plaignant point de lui, n'a jamais cru lui faire grace. Mais s'il vous falloit une preuve de plus des tendres égards, de l'estime respectueuse, de l'affectueuse reconnoissance qui Jean-Jacques a toujours conservées pour l'homme vertueux qu'il appeloit son père, j'oserai le dire, monsieur, vous la trouveriez dans la vénération dont nous sommes pénétrés, M. du Peyrou et moi, pour la mémoire de George Keith ; nous qui avons nourri pour J. J. Rousseau un attachement unique comme son objet ; un attachement que sa mort n'a pu affoiblir, et qui prolongera nos regrets jusqu'au moment de la nôtre.

"Le 20 mai 1779."

NOTE C (p. 32)

D'Holbach's account, as related by Cerutti, of the "*scene which determined Rousseau's rupture with himself and his friends*," is proved false by the history of this scene related by Grimm in the *Correspondance Littéraire*, August 1755—that is to say, a few days after the actual incident—and in an epoch before there was any open quarrel with Rousseau. The story has to do with the very malicious "pleasantry" of these more witty than kind-hearted "Holbachiens," played off upon an unlucky country curé, seized with the ambition to shine in the domain of letters. The Curé of Monchauvet had tormented Diderot to give him his literary opinion upon a play entitled *Bathsheba*. To make sport of the would-be dramatist, Diderot invited the Curé de Monchauvet to read his play to the assembled society of the Baron d'Holbach, the company being warned beforehand to

flatter the foolish author's vanity by simulated ecstasies. In Grimm's original story it is related how this cruel "persiflage" of the country curé affords amusement to these gay Holbachiens; and how Jean Jacques is the only person in the company who refuses to enter into the spirit of the thing. "Le seul citoyen de Genève," wrote Grimm, in 1755, "avec sa probité à toute épreuve, était resolu de faire le rôle d'honnête homme et a, en effet, si bien reussi, que le curé l'a pris dans une haine inexprimable." That is all, in the first account; one is conscious of a sneer at the citizen of Geneva, who conceives himself bound to be more honest than his neighbours; but it is not maintained that Jean Jacques made any exhibition of disapproval, or that he broke up the merry party. In the account given in 1789, of an incident that had happened thirty-four years earlier, Rousseau is accused of offensive rudeness to the curé himself; of having told him frankly that he was being made a fool of; that his play was rubbish; and, in short, "qu'il ferait mieux de sortir, et d'aller vicarier dans son village." On the strength of this, a violent altercation ensues between the would-be poet and Jean Jacques, and in the end they come to blows, and have to be separated, and Jean Jacques, "*foaming at the mouth and furious*" (in short, exhibiting himself in his legendary character of a maniac), dashes from the room, and henceforth refuses all the advances made to him by the Baron and his friends. Musset-Pathay commented excellently upon the flagrant blunders in this clumsy history.

"Il me parait évident,"—wrote the author of *l'Histoire de J. J. Rousseau*, "que M. d'Holbach a lui-même arrangé cette histoire comme il convenait à ses interêts. La date donnée par Grimm le prouve sans réplique. Le fait arriva dans le mois d'aout 1755, puisque la lettre dans laquelle on le raconte est du 15 de ce mois. S'il s'était passé comme, longtemps aprés, le Baron voulut le faire croire, il en faudrait conclure que Jean Jacques

et lui ne se sont plus revus depuis 1755. Or ils ont eu des rapports ensemble postérieurement à cette époque. En 1757, le Baron vint à la Chevrette, pour voir Rousseau moins, il est vrai, par plaisir, que par curiosité, puisque c'était pour voir Jean Jacques amoureux—mais Madame d'Epinay aurait évité de les faire trouver ensemble si'ls eussént été brouillés à l'occasion du curé de Monchauvet. Les lettres de Madame d'Epinay à Jean Jacques et celles de ce dernier, datées de la Chevrette, et de 1757, prouvent que tous les deux allèrent chez le baron d' Holbach ; enfin Diderot y mena Rousseau dîner dans le même temps . . . Ce mensonge, bien démontré, suffit pour faire réduire le temoignage de M. d'Holbach à sa juste valeur ; et me donne l'occasion de répéter une rémarque déjà faite : c'est que *toutes les fois qu'on verifie une accusation contre Jean Jacques lorsqu'il existe des materiaux pour le faire, on arrive au même resultat, c'est-à-dire à une imputation calomnieuse, et ce fait est sans exception.*"—Musset-Pathay, *Hist. de J. J. Rousseau,* III Partie *Biographie,* p. 132.

NOTE CC (p. 50)

The articles of La Harpe, selected by A. A. Barbier from the *Mercure de France* and reprinted in his *Nouveau Supplément au Cours de Littérature de M. de la Harpe,* are not the only libels the editor published against Rousseau. The obituary notice of October 1778, already signalized, was followed in November 1778 by another malicious article, where, behind the pretence of opening a subscription for Thérèse, it was attempted to establish that Rousseau had degraded himself in the character of a distinguished man of letters, by making himself a copyist of music, and that as a result of his vainglorious independence, he left his widow dependent upon public charity. The treacherous assumption of a sympathetic tone belonged to the methods of the editor of the *Mercure,* who, as the director of a printed news-

paper open to the public, could not allow himself the same licence in attacking a revered author as Grimm used in his secret manuscript journal. La Harpe's professed motive was to start a subscription for the purchase of some "Musical Airs" left by Rousseau, and described by the editor of the *Mercure* as "the only inheritance bequeathed his widow."

"On aime à se représenter l'eloquent et profond auteur du *Contrat Social*," writes this adroit defamer, whose mask of sympathy, however, does not conceal his malice, "modulant sur un clavier des airs champêtres, des vaudevilles et des romances;—mais on s'étonne de voir ce véhément écrivain, ce génie libre et fier, accoutumé a méditer sur les intérêts des souverains, et des peuples, et né ce semble pour leur faire adorer la justice, oubliant tout à coup sa destinée glorieuse, pour embrasser la profession des mercenaires et devenir un simple copiste de musique!—celui qui consacra des hymnes à la vertu, qui sut réveiller en nous l'instinct sublime de la liberté, qui fait encore retentir la voix de la nature dans le cœur des mères, n'a-t-il donc pas pu subsister des produits de ses chefs-d'œuvre? . . . Il ne laisse pour héritage à sa respectable veuve que des *Mémoires*, dont elle ne peut tirer aucun parti, parceque des convenances sociales en arrêtent la publicité. L'unique ressource de Madame Rousseau consiste en un recueil de *petits airs*, composé par l'auteur d'Emile et d'Héloise: elle offre ce recueil au public, moyennant une souscription d'un louis."

[This imposture was exposed by Madame de la Tour, and by other writers in the *Année Littéraire*, the *Journal de Paris*, and elsewhere. It was pointed out that it was not to follow a "mercenary profession," to earn one's bread by labour, instead of obtaining it by flattery and favour; and it was established also that Rousseau's widow, who had settled on her two pensions, and for whom the Count de Girardin had arranged that she should receive the proceeds of the sale of a new general edition of her illustrious husband's works, stood

in no need of the assistance of his "benefactors and old friends," whose services and friendship had taken the shape of persecutions and calumnies.]

NOTE D. THE MSS.

NOTE TO MS., ARCHIVES AND ARSENAL

Comparison of the old cahiers and new cahiers that replace them in the Arsenal Manuscript, where some of the alterations made in the original narrative to carry out the suggestions of the Notes can be traced.

ARSENAL MANUSCRIPT

NOTES OF SOME OLD CAHIERS THAT ARE REPLACED BY NEW ONES

Old cahier	142	replaced	by new cahier	137
,,	155	,,	,,	147
,,	157	,,	,,	149
,,	158	,,	,,	150
,,	159	,,	,,	151
,,	161	,,	,,	153

COMPARISON OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

(It has been said that all the "changes" made in the corrected cahiers of the Archives and Arsenal Manuscripts are to be found faithfully reproduced in the copy which is the manuscript of the Historical Library of Paris, in the Rue de Sévigné. Here is an assertion that must be verified by a comparison of the manuscripts themselves. But among the cahiers of the Arsenal Manuscript there are several old ones that can be compared with new ones which replace them. I am about to point out several corrections in the first narrative, which this comparison enables one to discover.)

Cahier 142 of the Arsenal Manuscript is an old one

which is replaced by cahier 137 of the Archives Manuscript.

The differences one perceives between the first version and the corrected narrative serve to show (1) what were the real sentiments of Madame d'Epinay towards her cousin, Madame d'Houdetot; (2) the care taken by the author to obey the instructions contained in one of the Notes (127)—"*Reject all passionate letters in the first love affair: these must have a tone of esteem, of confidence; make the mother, the children, and all, appear relatively to Volx.*"

Letter of Mdme. d'Epinay to M. Grimm, old cahier 142, new cahier 137. Brunet Manuscript, vol. vii.; *Memoires*, vol. iii. p. 6.

(It will be seen that this note has been obeyed. In the letters to Volx the expressions of love are replaced by others that signify "confidence" and "esteem." The mother, the children, and all, appear relatively to Volx.)

End of a letter from Volx to Mdme. de M. :—

Old cahier 142.	New cahier 137.
"I kiss these eyes which are to my soul what the sunshine is to the plants." Erased and corrected as in cahier 137.	"Adieu. I beg you to offer my homage to your mother, and to embrace the children for me, if this should not offend Mdlle. Pauline's dignity."

Reply of Mdme. de M. to M. V. :—

Old cahier 142.	New cahier 137.
"I come to speak with you, my tender friend. I cannot forget your position. Oh, my friend, how sorry I feel for you! You will never be able to bear all	"I thank you for the explanations you give me about that tone of reserve which, I admit, has tormented me a little. I fall at your feet, and render

your sorrows alone. Let me share them. If I were the mistress of fate you would only have happiness, and you should always be happy. I should begin by making you return to me. But, look at me from where you are. You will see that your Emilie is neither sad nor gay with her friends —only a little distraite. If you see her alone, you will see her in a profound reverie, with damp eyes, a smiling mouth, sighing at times and calling to you as though you could hear her. Yes, my friend, solitude—your letters—your image —that is what can save me. I take pleasure in my melancholy: everything that diverts me from it annoys me and makes me impatient."

Marked out. Note written in the margin as in cahier 137.

Conclusion of the letter:—

"You ask me if I keep my heart for you? How could I not keep it for you, O my adorable friend? Does it belong to me? And if it did belong to me, would I not give it to you? It

justice to your sublim prudence. Yes, my friend not for the first time ca I say that I feel that on can be led by you in al security. Every day yo inspire me more and mor with the sense of securit felt by a child who sleep on his mother's knees. am neither sad nor gay but somewhat distraite This condition has it charm, and I cannot easil forgive any one who at tempts to wrest me fro it."

"I have read Paulin the passage in your lette in which you speak of h and her brother, and i which you beg for permis sion to embrace her. Sh looked at my mother an

waited for you to love —to love uniquely, to love for ever."

Marked out. Note written in the margin as in cahier 137.

said, 'I think we may give him permission.' My mother laughed and replied, 'Yes, but only up to the time of his return.' Pauline said, 'Certainly. And afterwards we will see!'" (Pauline was six years old.)

Letter of Madame Montbrillant to M. Volx:—

Old cahier 142.

"I was obliged to leave you yesterday as the Comtesse de Lange arrived. She was *more haggard and excited than ever, and screeched like a blind woman; I believe she is going mad.*[1] My companion remained silent and I was bored. She *threatened*[2] to come here on a few days' visit. *I shall do all I can to prevent this.* The Countess wishes to meet Milord and his wife. I shall not meddle with that. Ladi, who has seen little of her, does not like her. If Milord speaks to me about the matter, I shall beg him not to consider me. While praising the heart and soul of the Countess, I shall not hold my tongue about her *insufferable character.*"[3]

New cahier 137. Changes.

[1] She was *gayer* and *more excitable* than ever.

[2] She led us to *hope* that we should see her here for a few days with la Blainville. I shall do all I can to prevent this, *if I can do so without wounding her*, for her sister is dull and insupportable.

[3] While praising the heart of the Countess, I shall not remain silent about the *irregularity of this liaison.*

Cahier 155 is an old one replaced by cahier 147, which has served as a copy.

Brunet Manuscript, vol. viii. page 29. *Mem.*, vol. iii. page 143.

In these cahiers there is a letter from Volx to Mdme. de Montbrillant, written after her departure for Geneva. The letter gives an account of what has taken place during the eight or ten days since she left. In the old cahier Volx says that Garnier has sent him a letter from René. This incident is mentioned neither in cahier 147, nor in the Brunet Manuscript.

Volx writes: "*You did very well in not replying to René.*[1] It is my turn to give information about him. Since your departure, strange things—incredible things—have taken place. I myself, who witnessed them, do not know what to think. *On the day of your departure* I received a letter from him which was full of madness and malice. I replied as he deserved, and as you always should have done. He returned my letter—so that there is an open rupture between us. *Entre nous*, I have seized this opportunity of exposing him to Garnier, and I have also sent him the *letter he wrote you on the day of your departure.* These papers have at least justified you in part in the eyes of Garnier [and *I have done the rest*[2]], and without knowing it René himself has done the rest."[3] But Garnier has sent me the letter which Rousseau gave you to deliver to him (Garnier). Do you know what this

[1] Brunet knew that Madame d'Epinay had replied from Geneva on November 12 to this letter of Rousseau's by a letter which commenced—"I only received your letter of October 29 upon my arrival here on November 9." He also knew that this letter of October 29 from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay was provoked by the first reply of Grimm on October 28 to a long letter of Rousseau's written on October 26: a letter which Grimm tried to show was only received by him on the day of Madame d'Epinay's departure, November 1. Brunet attempts to get out of the dilemma by thus altering the phrase: "*A few days before your departure* I received a letter from Rousseau."

[2] Cahier 155. [3] Cahier 147.

pretended letter of justification contains? It accuses you of having opened his letter. And from this, he says, has resulted a trouble which may go very far; for he is not in a mind to pass over in silence the falseness and intrigues of his pretended friends, and thus have their wrong-doings attributed to him."[1]

Cahier 157 is an old one replaced by cahier 149; the Brunet Manuscript, vol. viii. page 38; *Mem.*, vol. iii. page 154.

Madame de Montbrillant à Volx: "*I want to ask you what is this printed letter by René, of which Voltaire has heard.*[2] He accuses a friend herein of the most abominable treachery. It is said that he refers to Garnier in a manner that makes his identity unmistakable. What does this fresh outrage mean? On what is it founded? Is it what you wrote to me about the Marquis Dulaurier?"

In the old cahier 157 this question is inserted as a note in the margin, *which proves that it did not form part of the original letter.*[3] And this explains itself when one remembers that the *Letter to d'Alembert* only appeared in October 1758; that it was only in May 1758 that Rousseau heard from Madame d'Houdetot of Diderot's treachery; and that Madame d'Epinay's letter was supposed to have been written in December 1757.

In the same letter Tronchin is stated to have shown a letter of René's, which was certainly not written by Rousseau. (*Memoirs*, vol. iii. page 155. New cahier 149, old cahier 157, Brunet Manuscript, vol. viii. page 38.)

"'Madame, only a monster could think and write thus of his friend. Beware of him: *I am making a great mistake if he is not a knave.*' Then I told Tronchin of everything concerning me in the matter; of the last

[1] In cahier 155 only. Totally omitted from cahier 147.

[2] The editor of the *Memoirs* has thus altered the phrase: "What is this letter of Rousseau's to D'Alembert, which is appearing?"

[3] See facsimile of this page from cahier 157.

troubles we have had with this man; and he is indignant, but not surprised. He showed me a letter which a M. *N*——, *a preacher, received* yesterday from Garnier."

Old cahier 157—". . . *which he recently received from Garnier.*"

Cahier 158 is an old one replaced by cahier 150. In the old cahier Madame de Montbrillant, in telling Volx of the illness that overtook her before arriving at Geneva, observes: "I remembered that already upon a previous occasion Costa[1] had tried to persuade me to abandon the journey on the grounds that it would be too fatiguing." This phrase is marked out in cahier 150. Probably her critics told Madame d'Epinay that she had said before that Tronchin refused to treat her unless he had her under his eyes.

Cahier 159 is an old one replaced by cahier 151. Grimm disliked Madame de Montbrillant's son. He is extremely maltreated in the *Memoirs*. In the old cahiers, in speaking of her illness, she says: "The indifference of the little Montbrillant contributed a good deal to sadden my soul." Above "the little Montbrillant," in Madame d'Epinay's handwriting is "my son." And it is "my son" that figures in cahier 151.

Cahier 161 is an old one replaced by cahier 153. Madame de Montbrillant gives an account of her relations with Voltaire.

The old cahier: "I am so frightened of going too far that I prefer to go slowly; that was why I did not show myself eager to accept the advances of Voltaire. I did well; for, according to my oracle, he treats me very differently from the way he treats others." ("According to what every one tells me." Cahier 153.) "Until now he has only met women who threw themselves at his head *or who were content to dispense with all formality;* and as he does not care to be troubled, and has not much consistency and sequence in his wishes, *he has got to behave more freely than he should*

[1] In the old Cahier "Costa" figures instead of Tronchin.

towards women who are not his mistresses—thus he keeps them waiting two hours, receives them in his dressing-gown, or tells them sharply that they have arrived inopportunely. But me he receives with the greatest respect." (Cahier 153.)

Cahier 153 (corrected): "He wrote them verses, then he made fun of them. I, who do not care for verses or for compliments, assumed a very different tone with him. He felt it. He receives me with the greatest respect and courtesy."

Old cahier 161: "I have been polite to his niece —but I allowed the uncle to understand that it was for him that I came, and expressed this with a charm that you have sometimes known in your Emilie."

New cahier 153: "I get on very well with the niece, but I have let the uncle know that it is to him that I am paying homage. This I think I have done prettily, and with great success."

Old cahier 161: "I admire my tender friend. With what delicacy you bring foward all that can please me! You only are—you! But you don't speak any longer of the Marquis. Tell him how much I like him. And tell me in detail of the effect produced by my accident, especially at Milord's. The little one (herself) is sensitive. She is even a little vain; she believes herself cherished by all these good people; she says she deserves it—and she awards any one a place in her heart according to her inclination and to the reward she will get in return."

New cahier 153: "Tell me about Pauline and also about my mother, and let me hear of the effect caused by my accident, especially on my daughter. Do not forget to tell the Marquis how much I like him, also Milord. I admit that I feel somewhat vain at being cherished by all these good people."

Cahier 163, an old one, is much corrected.

Was Grimm jealous of Voltaire's attentions to his (Grimm's) mistress? In any case, we see that Madame

d'Epinay made an effort to convince Grimm that she was indifferent to the great man.

Madame de Montbrillant to Volx: "I am going to make an effort to tell you what I think of Voltaire, before summing up the courage to speak to you of myself. *Well, my friend, I do not like him at all. Everything is superficial in him.*" (Marked out. Written above.) "I should not like to live incessantly with him." (See *Memoirs*, vol. iii. page 196.)

Among the old cahiers at the Arsenal, between 154 and 168, one notices that two are missing: 156, which would have given the first narrative of Madame d'Epinay's accident during her journey to Geneva, related in cahier 149; and cahier 167, which would have mentioned Madame de Montbrillant's second malady, which occurred so unfortunately at the moment of the accouchement of her maid, related in cahier 166.

NOTE ON THE TITLE 'HISTORY OF MADAME RAMBURE'

This title—"History of Madame Rambure"—appears at the head of a loose page of the Arsensal Manuscript. The name "Rambure" has been marked out and that of "Montbrillant" written in its place. I give it as it stands. The page is numbered 4. "The Announcement of the Editor," on this page, is in Madame d'Epinay's handwriting.

"The misfortunes that overwhelmed Madame de Montbrillant are known to everybody. The tears shed by the sensitive on her tomb are not yet dry. But few people are acquainted with the details of the sad events that so tried her courage during a space of forty years.[1] The attachment I have had for her since childhood, the cares and interests that were confided me upon the death of her father, the friendship and entire confidence she had in me, have made known to me the most intimate movements of this unfortunate woman.[2]

[1] Fifteen is written above the number forty.

[2] "Worthy" is written above the word "unfortunate."

I consider it a duty to her memory to give them to the public to-day. My aim in publishing the history of her misfortunes is to justify her in the eyes of the public, who suspect her of frivolity, of coquetterie, of lack of character—charges occasionally brought against her memory (correction) . . . is less to hold her up as an example of virtue and of constancy than to clear her name of the reproaches of weakness and of cowardice.

"From these details one will learn not to condemn too hastily. These *Memoirs* should also serve as a lesson to mothers. They will perceive there the danger of an education that is timid and uncertain. The one Madame de Montbrillant received rendered her timid—so that it took a number of years of misfortune to restore to her her natural firmness of character.

"As I am fearful of spoiling the colours of the tableau I am about to lay before you in all their exactness, I shall content myself with publishing the collection of letters I have scrupulously kept, both those by Madame de Montbrillant herself and those by different people who corresponded with her on business matters or as friends. The great facility with which she wrote, her naturalness, her sensibility, her credulity, and the beauty of her soul are exhibited in her correspondence. It would be easy for me to supplement by fictitious letters, those that are wanting to complete the account of *liaisons* told in this correspondence; but as I have already said, I do not wish to depart from the strict truth. I shall rest content, therefore, with narrating myself all that happened to my friend. It is for these parts alone that I crave indulgence. As for the letters themselves, since they are original, the truth makes . . .[1] It is for this reason that I have not omitted the smallest details. Madame de Montbrillant was the daughter of M. de G——. She lost her father at the age of ten. I was appointed her guardian, together with the Marquise, her mother. The Marquis de G——,

[1] Probably "their value," but the MS. is torn.

the father of Madame de Montbrillant, was a sub-lieutenant; and after the battle of X, in the year Z, he was given the command of Falzburg. In 17—, he started to establish himself in Paris with his wife and daughter, Emilie, in order that she might receive an education worthy of her birth. He died during the journey. The Marquis, who had always led an honourable life, only left to his daughter debts and an income of 3000 livres. During their marriage, the Marquis and Marquise only possessed an income of 2000 livres. . . ." (Here the MS. breaks off.)

NOTE DD

Arsenal Notes—where directions are given for entirely re-writing the story of René; and where we discover accordingly what does not belong to Madame d'Epinay's original narrative.

These Notes are on loose scraps of paper—the facsimiles given of the two most important amongst them (see facsimiles 8 and 9) show how they are drawn up. The number that accompanies each note indicated the cahier where the alteration had to be made. It has been already said that these numbers do not always now show the number of the altered cahier, because as a result of all these changes the manuscript became disarranged from the original ordering. But in the case of the old cahiers still belonging to the MS. the numbering of the references still corresponds with that of the cahiers.

This list does not give all the notes, but only those which refer to the alterations of Rousseau's history.

NOTES DES CHANGEMENTS A FAIRE DANS LA FABLE

1. On the general descriptive portrait of Rousseau.

1. *Arsenal Note, Ref.* 123.—*Note directing re-writing of story of Rousseau.*—See facsimile 9. Reprendre René dès le commencement il faut le mettre dans leurs promenades ou conversations à défendre

quelques thèses bizarres : il faut qu'on apprécie qu'il a de la délicatesse beaucoup de gout pour les femmes. Galamment brusque certain tems sans le voir. Madame de Montbrillant en demande raison—il repond en faisant le portrait de tous, beaucoup d'honnêteté et point de mœurs, demande ce qu'il pense d'elle—il répond ce qu'on en ditet ce qu'il en pense.

Arsenal Note, Ref. 79.—Mettre l'histoire de René en conversation avec lui pour le rendre moins postiche. Il a du chagrin, de la peine ; on débute par jouer la pièce de René ; voila son entrée dans la maison—la pièce était mauvaise mais d'un homme d'esprit. Mlle. Darci fera le portrait du Poëte et de la pièce.

In the 59th (new) cahier of the Archives MS. we have Mlle. Darci's portrait of René ; which, reported by the editor of the printed *Memoirs* (vol. i. p. 275) as the portrait of Rousseau by Mlle. d'Ette, is frequently quoted by modern critics as a life-like picture of Jean Jacques by a contemporary, handed down by Madame d'Epinay.

"*Nous avons debuté par une pièce nouvelle par M. René, ami de Formeuse*," Madame d'Epinay makes her heroine write—The officious editor (with his "knowledge of the times" always at hand when historical accuracy can be introduced) prints this "*Nous avons debuté par l'Engagement Téméraire, comédie nouvelle de M. Rousseau, ami de Francueil.*" As a matter of fact *L'Engagement Téméraire* was composed not for Madame d'Epinay and her circle at La Chevrette but at Chenonceau, for Madame Dupin, in the days when this lady, by Grimm's account, would not let Rousseau dine at table when she entertained men of letters !—And now for the description of the "Poet," which follows this first mention of René.

"Un homme de beaucoup d'esprit et peut-être un homme singulier," affirms Madame de Montbrillant. "Il est complimenteur, sans être poli ; ou au moins sans en avoir l'air. Il parait ignorer les usages du monde ;

mais il est aisé de voir qu'il a infiniment d'esprit. Il a le teint brun, et des yeux pleins de feu animent sa physionomie. Lorsqu'il a parlé, et qu'on le regarde, il parait joli; mais lorsqu'on le rappelle, c'est toujours en laid. On dit qu'il a des souffrances qu'il cache avec soin par je ne sais quel principe de vanité: c'est apparemment ce qui lui donne de temps en temps l'air farouche." —"Formeuse nous a présenté le pauvre diable d'auteur," relates the vivacious Mlle Darci,—"qui vous est pauvre comme Job mais qui a de l'esprit et de la vanité comme quatre. Sa pauvreté l'a forcé de se mettre aux gages de la belle-mère de Formeuse en qualité de sécretaire. On dit toute son histoire aussi bizarre que sa personne."

We have only to compare this description with the model of the mythical Jean Jacques sketched out for Madame d'Epinay in the note where she is told to entirely re-write her original sketch of René, to know with certainty who are the true authors of this portrait.

The circumstances of Rousseau's first acquaintanceship with Madame d'Epinay have been already examined. As for the theatricals at La Chevrette, the author of the *Confessions* speaks of them; but he does not say that his own play was performed there. He says:—

"Notwithstanding my stupidity and awkwardness, Madame d'Epinay wished me to share in the amusements at La Chevrette; there was a theatre there, where plays were often acted. They gave me a part, which I studied incessantly for six months, and which I had to be prompted in from first line to last, upon the night of the representation. After this, they did not offer me a part again."

"*Pure affectation de gaucherie que ce recit!*" exclaims Saint-Marc Girardin; "*Madame d'Epinay dans ses Mémoires raconte l'histoire tout autrement,*" and the critic proceeds to quote what we know is not Madame d'Epinay's account, but one that affords negative evidence only of what she did *not* relate.

2. DUCLOS' INTRODUCTION TO MADAME D'EPINAY

Arsenal Note, Ref. 104.—"Il faut que René parle de Desbarre [1]—service rendu. Désire le connaître Formeuse en fait l'éloge quoique le connaissant peu—on prie René de l'amener. On ne l'a pas comme on veut, c'est parce-qu'il ne me refuserait rien que je ne veux rien lui demander—dire enfin j'ai vu Desbarres."

This second note, belonging to the early acquaintanceship of René and the confiding Madame de Montbrillant, refers to a fictitious history René relates to his patroness, gaining thereby, not only sympathy for himself, but also interest in a personage painted in the novel as a more dangerous, if not a more despicable, scoundrel than himself, viz. Desbarres: (a personage who stands to represent Duclos)—(See 69 New Archives Cahier.)

Madame de Montbrillant is writing to Formeuse:—

"We took a delightful walk to-day: only the presence of my tenderly-loved friend was needed to complete my soul's satisfaction. A conversation I had with René during this walk enchanted me. How is it you have never told me about Desbarres; and the *service he has rendered René?* There is a man one should build altars to! And with what simplicity René told his own misfortunes! I am still deeply moved by it all.—Perhaps you already know the whole story? and yet I feel that I must write it down for you, just as René told it me. I was curious to know his history; and to lead up naturally to my questions, I asked him if he had been long in Paris?

"'Three years, madame,' he replied.

"'Dare I ask you, sir,' I said, 'what brought you here?'

[1] "René must be made to speak *of the service rendered him by Desbarres.* She desires to know him. Formeuse praises him, though he only knows him slightly: they beg René to introduce him. (He replies:) '*One cannot have him easily: and just because he would not refuse me anything, I should not ask anything of him.*' When she has seen him, she should say: 'Well, I have met Desbarres.'"

"'The necessity of enduring an injustice; and the prospect of being hanged.'

"'Sir! is it possible?'

"'Yes, madame; and if this did not come about, I owe it to M. Desbarres, who, to save me, ran the risk of involving himself in serious troubles.'

"'You awaken my curiosity as much as you inspire me with interest; and if I did not fear to be indiscreet, I . . .'

"'Fear nothing of the sort, madame; the only way I can repay M. Desbarres is by acknowledging my own faults, and his benefits.'

"'You wish to know how I came to be in danger of hanging? Well, because I happen to be an honest man; and because for once in my life (!) I was true to myself, and a faithful friend.'

"'I was in Spain as attaché to M. le Duc de P——, and I was very intimate with the secretary of the English ambassador. He was honest and virtuous: and could thus expect as little as I could to be fortunate. It is true that his simplicity almost amounted to stupidity: but he played chess well; and at this time chess was my chief pleasure. He, on his side, was very intimate with a Portuguese Jesuit. On several occasions I had dined with them and heard their conversations, invariably devoted to their private business enterprises—the Jesuit having interested my friend in a trade he was carrying on with India. I had often joked with them about their ambitious projects, and had told them they would certainly conquer the world, if they did not get hanged before accomplishing it. One day this worthy member of the Society of Jesus arrived with an important air, to request my friend to write at once a letter of which he brought him a copy. He had the stupidity to write it, without, as he afterwards assured me, having understood what it was about; and also to sign certain bills of exchange. A few days later the Jesuit disappeared and my friend was arrested as a

forger! They produced his letter as proof against him: and his ambassador, who at first had reclaimed him, then, by a policy often practised by the great, left him to his fate. I, who knew how it had all come about, considered myself bound to bear witness in my friend's favour. I presented myself in court, and I gave an absolutely truthful account of all I knew: and I did not spare the monk. I offered to confirm my statement by oath. My testimony was accepted. I had the imprudence to make known to my friend by writing the steps I had taken; and to promise him success. The next day I was denounced to the Inquisition as an impostor, the calumniator of the reverend fathers, and my friend's accomplice. I was thrown into prison, and M. le Duc de P., who was a pious Catholic, and who owed me money he could not pay, felt conscientious scruples against defending me. By general consent, I was condemned to be hanged. M. Desbarres, who was travelling with the Cardinal X., happened to be then in Spain. I had been in literary correspondence with him; and hearing of my case, he obtained permission to see me. He decided that I was innocent; and not being able to get the judgment altered, he used every effort to induce the French ambassador to claim me and get my case judged in France. This was made difficult by my imprudent letter to my friend, which seemed to justify the suspicion that I was his accomplice. M. Desbarres first of all thought to get me out of the hands of the Inquisition by bribery. It cost him a hundred thousand crowns; I have since discovered that this meant half his yearly income. At length, as a result of his credit and exertions, I was sent to France to be tried over again, and, very likely, condemned over again, if M. Desbarres, instead of continuing his travels, which were to have lasted two months longer, had not left the cardinal in Spain; and returned for the sake of a wretched man brought back as a criminal. His credit and reputation for uprightness in Paris, and the interest his talents and

merits have made for him at court, hardly sufficed to obtain the revision of my case. It was a year before I was at length declared innocent, and free to earn my bread by the sweat of my brow. I then made the acquaintance of M. de Formeuse, who found me a post in his father's house; whence I derive my livelihood. Here, madame, you have the story of my misfortunes, and of M. Desbarres' benefits.'

"'You give me, sir, the strongest desire to know this worthy man; I confess that it would be one of the great privileges of my life: could you not persuade him to do me the honour of coming to see me?'

"'Madame, what you ask is most difficult—*one cannot have him easily*, he is so much sought after; *besides, precisely because he would not refuse me anything, I would not ask him to do anything.* He has already done too much for me, since I can never do anything for him.'

"Oh, my friend! how happy his own conduct must have made Desbarres! What a satisfaction to have saved the life and reputation of a worthy man."

It is difficult to decide whether the motive of this incredible fable was to imply that Rousseau entertained Madame d'Epinay with falsehoods; or whether it was thrown in as other patently fictitious episodes are, to keep up the pretension that the author, whilst founding her story on facts, is not responsible for the conclusions her readers may draw as to the original persons and events she has in view, when utilizing her own experiences for her novel. This deliberate falsification of historical and well-known events leads those editors of the work who have pledged themselves to the theory of its "veracity" to strange devices. In this case the editor Brunet escapes the necessity of explanations by suppressing the story altogether; and by referring his readers to Rousseau's own account of his quarrel with M. de Montaigu, French ambassador at Venice, given in the seventh book of the *Confessions*. The authors of

La Jeunesse de Madame d'Epinay reproduce the story, but permit themselves to change the phrase, "*j'étais en Espagne attaché à M. le Duc de P.*" into "*j'étais à Venise attaché à M. le Comte de Montaigu,*" without esteeming it necessary to inform their readers that they have made this alteration. They take the opportunity, however, to remind their readers in a note that the author of the *Confessions* acknowledges that in his young days in Savoy he passed himself off as an Englishman upon the more charming than estimable lady, Madame Larnage, whom he met on the road to Montpellier; and consequently, they suggest, he may have lied to Madame d'Epinay. E. Scherer also settles the difficulty in this off-hand manner. The just solution is that the "some one" who lied in this case was neither Rousseau nor Madame d'Epinay, but the author of the plot to revise her story from the commencement.

3.

Supposed false charges against Madame d'Epinay after Madame de Jully's death. Grimm's supposed duel and Rousseau's (supposed) novel.

(This fable is fully examined vol. ii. pp. 65–76.)

Arsenal Note, Ref. 125.—"Madame de Ménil aura donné un diamont à Volnex pour ses dettes, il part elle meurt—Madame de Montbrillant est soupçonnée de l'avoir pris—les uns la défendent, les autres l'accusent —on se bat.

"Elle dit en mourant: Il est à Constantinople. Je vais dans un serail où je ne lui serai pas infidèle.[1]

"Rôle de René qui prend tous ces gens là pour une caverne de fripons. Il fit un roman sur les bruits publics

[1] Madame de Ménil shall have given a diamond to Volnex to pay his debts with. He leaves. She dies. Madame de Montbrillant is suspected of having taken it. Some defend and others accuse her. They fight.

She says when dying, "He is at Constantinople. I am entering a harem where I shall never be unfaithful to him."

sur l'injustice des réputations. Cet ouvrage fut donné sans qu'il se nomme, fit grande impression. René ou Volx —alors c'est René qui se nomme—tout est détruit, avec beaucoup de talent, il n'en peut souffrir à personne.

"Dites ce qui l'étonne le plus c'est de voir combien on est pressé de déshonorer. J'ai peu l'honneur de la connaître—je sais qu'elle est riche, elle a de l'esprit—on dit qu'elle est honnête. Je ne sais si elle est coupable ou non—cela n'est pas vraisemblable mais ma foi cela me donne un souverain mépris pour ceux qui sont si pressés à croire—il faut avoir peu de moeurs pour avoir besoin de déshonorer les autres si vite—et il se bat chez le Comte de G. Madame de Montbrillant envoit tous les jours savoir de ses nouvelles. Impression de cette histoire sur le mari, mère, toute la famille.

" Donnez le nom de Chevalier à Volx.

" Faites une lettre où elle peigne l'effet que son malheur a fait sur tous, et sur René, ce n'est pas, dit-il, le moment que les gens sont à plaindre qu'ils sont malheureux—lorsqu'on lui reproche qu'il a détruit l'effet du livre—je n'aime pas qu'on me donne l'oeuvre d'autrui, ils sont trop bons ou pas assez pour moi.—*Note I.*

Arsenal Note, Ref. 126.—" Desbarres veut dénigrer le service de Volx—cela n'a servi qu'à faire un éclat du diable."

2. (The rôle of René, who describes all these people as a den of thieves. He writes a novel, about public gossip and the unjust reputations founded upon it. This book was given without his name and made a huge impression. Was it by René, or by Volx? Then René gives his name: the whole effect is spoilt: with any amount of cleverness himself he can't endure that other people should be supposed to have any.

Say that what astonishes him most, is to see in what a hurry people are to dishonour others. I have not the honour of her acquaintance. I know she is rich and clever, and passes for honest. Whether she is guilty or no I don't know, but it doesn't seem probable she should

be, and on my faith! I feel a sovereign contempt for those who are so prompt to believe it. One can't be very moral oneself if one is so ready to condemn others. And he fights at the house of the Count de G. Madame de Montbrillant sends every day for news about him. The impression made by this story on the husband, mother, and on the whole family.

Give the name of "knight" to Volx. Write a letter where she paints the effects of her misfortune on every one—and on René.—"It is not," he says, "in the moment when people are to be pitied that they are unhappy"—when people reproach him with having destroyed himself the good effect his book had made —"I don't like that the works of other people should be attributed to me; either they are too good for me or else they are not good enough."

Desbarres seeks to depreciate Volx' services:—all this has only served to make the devil of a fuss!)

4. THE OFFER OF THE HERMITAGE

Arsenal Note, Ref. 130.—"René est triste, la vie de Paris l'ennuie, l'injustice, la révolte. Arrivé de Tronchin —René le présente.

Ref. 134.—"René vient confier les propositions de la république. Ce qu'on lui répond on en fait un mystère à Volx. L'histoire de René apprise par Costa faire à ce sujet la conversation sur cette partie du journal entre Costa et Madame de Montbrillant—il faut que Volx ignore la proposition des Roches, quand il l'apprend—mon ami, repondit elle, ne me dites pas cela deux fois car je me suis toujours si mal trouvée de faire le bien qu'il me prendrait peut-être envie de faire le mal pour voir si je ne m'en trouverais pas mieux.

"C'est par la lettre de Costa qu'il l'apprend—porter la vieille—faire l'installation de René aux Roches. Voir dans une lettre de René ce que c'est que l'échange des manteaux."

The translation of these notes is given and the facts are fully dealt with, vol. i. pp. 187–198.

5. FIRST QUARREL WITH DIDEROT

Arsenal Note, Ref. 134.—"Preparez les plaintes de René sur Garnier, c'est Madame Eloi et sa fille qui faisait agir Garnier et qui jouait René—on apprend par Volx que René ne met de l'insistance à cette querelle que vis à vis de Madame de Montbrillant—et point avec Garnier.

"Dites que Garnier payait l'entretien des Elois ce qui fait qu'il n'avait plus de quoi aller voir René."

(Prepare René's complaints about Garnier. It was Madame Eloi and her daughter who stirred up Garnier to act and who imposed upon René: Volx affirms that René makes this quarrel an important affair only with Madame de Montbrillant and not with Garnier.

Say that Garnier paid for the support of the Elois and that for this reason he could not afford to go to see René.)

The Archives cahier 134 shows that pages have been inserted where this new version of the story appears.

The story of the first quarrel with Diderot is fully dealt with, vol. ii. pp. 14–23.

6. THE ANONYMOUS LETTER AND THE FIRST QUARREL WITH MADAME D'EPINAY

Arsenal Note, Ref. 145 neuf or 149 vieux.—"Voir si après la lettre commencée il ne faut pas un narré du tuteur qui explique tout l'intrigue de René—il faisait semblant d'accuser Madame de Montbrillant d'avoir pour le détacher de la comtesse écrit une lettre anonyme à Dulaurier pour accuser René et elle d'un commerce secret —il est certain qu'il y eut une lettre anonyme à Dulaurier écrite, et il y a lieu de croire qu'il fut de René lui même peut-être faut il commencer dés lors l'intrigue

avec Garnier peut-être faut il pour cela faire repartir Dulaurier."

(The translation of this note and all facts of this libel are given, vol. i. pp. 241, 233.)

7. ROUSSEAU'S VISIT TO DIDEROT AND THE STORY OF GARNIER'S WIFE

Arsenal Note, Ref. 141.—"La femme de Garnier qui n'est qu' une bonne femme mais qui a une pénétration peu commune voyant son mari desolé le lendemain lui en demande la raison et l'ayant appris lui dit : vous ne connaissez pas cet homme là, il en dévore d'envie : il fera un jour quelque grand forfait plutot que de se laisser ignorer. Tiens, je ne jurerais pas qu'il ne prit le parti des Jésuites. La femme de Garnier a senti juste mais ce n'est pas cela que René fera ; c'est contre les philosophes qu'il prendra parti et finira par écrire contre ses amis, tournez cela à la façon de Wolf."

See facsimile, and page 93 for translation.

For complete treatment of this libel see vol. ii. pp. 24–25.

8. DIDEROT'S LETTER INSISTING THAT ROUSSEAU SHOULD ACCOMPANY MADAME D'EPINAY TO GENEVA

Arsenal Note, Ref. 153.—"Lorsque René se dévoile par la lettre de Garnier trouvée a voila donc l'énigme expliqué ce n'etait donc pas seulement Debarre—c'etait René qui l'éloignait.

Arsenal Note, Ref. 153.—"Il ne faut pas que Madame de Montbrillant sache encore ce que contenait la lettre dont elle était chargée par René. C'est Volx qui l'explique au 154 cahier. Refaire la petite querelle avec Volx le jour du départ. Qu'elle y fait moins l'enfant.

"Pas un mot René à Madame de Montbrillant sur ce que Volx a écrit ; pas de réponse de lui, il faut remplacer tout cela." (*Note also written by Diderot.*)

The translation and explanation of these notes, which trace the story that Madame d'Epinay has to substitute for her own account of the events which preceded her departure for Geneva, are given vol. i. pp. 274–295.

9. DIDEROT'S SUPPOSED COUNSELS TO ROUSSEAU ABOUT HIS LETTER TO SAINT-LAMBERT

Arsenal Note, Ref. 155.—"Il manque quelque chose sur l'affaire de Dulaurier, René et Garnier,—cela n'est pas assez clair—"

The reference here to cahier 155 happens to enable us to discover in a corrected old cahier in what way the affair of Dulaurier, René and Garnier has been added to in order to make more clear the version of the story imposed upon Madame d'Epinay. Facsimile No. 6 reproduces a page where Diderot's account of his good advice to Rousseau and of Rousseau's deceitful pretence of having followed it is made to explain his betrayal of Jean Jacques to Saint-Lambert. The full story is told vol. ii. pp. 28–29.

10.

Arsenal Note, Ref. 155.—"A mettre à la fin de tout ce qui regarde René. Voila cet homme qui faisait une code, il y'avait à lui pardonner toute la journée. Il se détachait de ses amis même involontairement lorsqu'ils acqueraient quelque supériorité."

This phrase is found in Volx's letter in the 147th new cahier, which replaces the corrected cahier 155. See also printed *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 149.

If we attend carefully to the directions given in connection with the special incidents that have been arranged by this plan, we shall discover that these ten notes establish that, in effect, Madame d'Epinay's original story of her introduction to, her relations with, her sentiments towards, her recollections about, and her

quarrel with, Rousseau has been "re-written from the commencement."

In other words, accepting as undeniable the fact that the notes suggesting changes in her story prove to us *what did not originally exist in it*, we have discovered that in no single case did Madame d'Epinay's account of these events agree with the account given by Diderot in his *Tablettes*, the one now faithfully reproduced in the *Memoirs*.

D. NOTE TO BRUNET'S MS.

Changes that have been made in the MS. by the editor of the printed *Memoirs* published in 1818.

These alterations can be verified in the MS. by any one who examines it, at the Bibliothèque Historique, in the Rue de Sévigné, Paris.

In the accompanying list of these alterations, the volume of the MS. where they will be found is indicated on the right, and the volume and page of the printed book where the falsified passage will be found on the left.

1. Des supposés services rendus à Rousseau par Duclos.

(*MS. iii.* 195.) *Suppressed and a note inserted.* (*Mem. i.* 185.)

2. De la mort de Mme. de Jully, des soupçons contre M. d'Epinay, le duel de Grimm, et le roman de Rousseau.

(*MS. vi.* 246.) *Changed, roman suppressed.* (*Mem. ii.* 122, 123.)

3. De l'offre par le Consistoire de Genève de la poste de Biblothécaire à Rousseau.

(*MS. vi.* 361.) *Changed.* (*Mem. ii.* 228.)

4. Des supposés obligations de Rousseau à Madame Levasseur.

(*MS. vi.* 235.) *Suppressed.* (*Mem. ii.* 234.)

5. De la lettre de Rousseau à Mme. d'Epinay où il est supposé n'avoir jamais vu la demeure de l'Ermitage avant de l'accepter.
(*MS. vii.* 121.) *Changed.* (*Mem. ii.* 240.)

6. Lettres inserées par l'Editeur qui n'appartiennent pas au manuscrit.
(*MS. vii.* 8.) *Inserted.* (*Mem. ii.* 252.)

7. Sur les occupations de Rousseau et l'allégation que son métier est celui de dessinateur et de peintre.
(*MS. vii.* 9.) *Changed.* (*Mem. ii.* 254.)

8. Sur la pension supposée faite par Grimm et Diderot aux Levasseurs.
(*MS. vii.* 15, 16.) *Changed.* (*Mem. ii.* 260, 262.)

9. Sur les raisons données par Rousseau pour motiver son refus de quitter Montmorency et de retourner passer l'hiver à Paris.
(*MS. vii.* 22.) *Changed.* (*Mem. ii.* 269.)

10. Sur la mort (supposée) de Gauffecourt en 1757.
(*MS. vii.* 75.) *Changed.* (*Mem. ii.* 314.)

11. Sur la supposition que Madame d'Epinay ne connaissait pas Tronchin en 1757.
(*MS. vii.* 149.) *Changed.* (*Mem. iii.* 93.)

12. Sur la grossesse et l'accouchement à Genève de la femme de chambre de Madame d'Epinay.
(*MS. viii.* 5, 141.) *Omitted.* (*Mem. iii.* 114.)

13. La lettre de Diderot en reproche parce que Rousseau ne s'offre pas pour accompagner Mme. d'Epinay à Genève.
(*MS. viii.* 6.) *Changed.* (*Mem. iii.* 116.)

14. La première réponse de Grimm à la lettre de Rousseau 26 Oct. 1757. *Suppressed by the author.*
(*MS. viii.* 21.) *Reference to letter inserted.* (*Mem. iii.* 135.)

15. La lettre de Rousseau à Madame d'Epinay, 29 Oct. (*MS. viii.* 21.) *Rectification of dates.* (*Mem. iii.* 135.)

16. La maladie faite par Madame d'Epinay en route pour Genève.
(*MS. viii.* 47.) *Suppressed.* (*Mem. iii.* 149, 150.)

17. Les réponses faites par Madame d'Epinay à la lettre de Rousseau de 29 Oct., et à sa lettre annonçant qu'il avait quitté l'Ermitage.
(*MS. viii.* 38.) *Changed, and Rousseau's true letter inserted.* (*Mem. iii.* 183, 184.)

18. 200 pages du manuscrit après une note qui affirme içi finissent les Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay.
(*MS. ix.* 38.) *Suppressed.* (*Mem. iii.* 235.)

THE OBJECT OF THESE CHANGES AND SUPPRESSIONS TO CONCEAL HISTORICAL INACCURACIES

1. *Duclos—Desbarres supposé avoir sauvé René d'être pendu.*

Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay, i. 185.—On lit dans une note à propos des services que Duclos est allegué avoir rendus à Rousseau, "comme il s'agit içi de l'affaire de Rousseau avec M. de Montaigu ambassadeur de France à Venise auprès duquel il fut accusé d'avoir vendu le chiffre de l'ambassade, et que malgré les efforts de Madame d'Epinay pour conserver l'originalité du recit de Rousseau le fait est rapporté avec toutes ses circonstances dans le viie livre des *Confessions,* il vaut mieux y renvoyer le lecteur ainsi qu'à la lettre de M. Dutheil inserée dans la Correspondance de J. J. Rousseau année 1744.

MS. Brunet, Bibliothèque de la Ville, iii. 195.—Au 3e tome du Manuscrit de Brunet on trouve qu'un morceau de papier, avec la note citée, a été collé au-dessus d'un long narratif sur les services que *Desbarres* avait rendus à *René* dans le temps qu'il était attaché à *M. le Duc de P.* en *Espagne.*

MS. des Archives.—La même histoire se trouve dans le manuscrit brouillon cahier 60, aux Archives—un cahier mis au net.

La Jeunesse de Mme. d'Epinay, p. 266.—M. M. Perey et Maugras imprime ce narratif en y ajoutant une note où ils insinuent que probablement ce fut Rousseau qui avait menti à Madame d'Epinay en lui racontant une histoire "qui ne concorde en aucune façon avec les *Confessions*." Cependant ces auteurs, pour donner plus de vraisemblance à cette supposition injurieuse, se permettent de faire, sans avertir leurs lecteurs "un changement dans la fable." Au lieu d'imprimer, d'après le MS. des Archives, J'étais en *Espagne* attaché à *M. le Duc de P. . . .* ils impriment : "J'étais à *Venise* attaché à *M. le comte de Montaigu*."

Le motif de cette fable sur les supposés services rendus par Duclos à Rousseau est d'imposer à ce dernier un nouveau "bienfaiteur," à qui, plus tard, on s'efforcera de montrer qu'il fut ingrat : c'est aussi de rendre Rousseau responsable pour les liaisons de Mme. d'Epinay avec un homme dangereux, qu'un ami judicieux m'aurait pas introduit dans la maison d'une jeune femme sans protecteur. Or ce ne fut pas Rousseau qui présenta Duclos à Mme. d'Epinay, mais, au contraire, ce fut chez Mme. d'Epinay que Rousseau fit connaissance avec Duclos.[1] Mais Madame d'Epinay n'était pas responsable pour cette fable. Dans le cahier du manuscrit brouillon on voit que c'est une intercalation et parmi les Notes de l'Arsenal se trouve celle-ci, qui se rapporte à cet incident :—

"Il faut que René parle de Desbarres,—service rendu. Formeuse en fait l'éloge ; quoique le connaissant peu. On prie René de l'amener. *On ne l'a pas comme on veut : c'est parce qu'il ne me refuserait rien que je ne veux rien lui demander.*[2] Lorsqu'on le voit, dire : enfin j'ai vu Desbarres."

[1] *Conf.*, Part ii. iv. vii.

[2] Cette phrase se retrouve dans le recit des MSS.

2. *La mort de Madame de (Ménil) Jully.*—Les faux soupçons contre Madame de Montbrillant (d'Epinay) à propos des papiers brûlés; l'absence de Formeuse (de Francueil) parce qu'il vient de perdre sa femme—la lâcheté des parents, et des calomnies des prétendus amis de Madame de Montbrillant: le roman de René, et sa vanité qui en détruit l'effet; le courage chevaleresque de Volx (Grimm) qui prend la défense de Mme. de Montbrillant quoique "la connaissant peu"; et qui se bat en duel pour elle, par le sentiment noble et généreux d'indignation contre des calomniateurs d'une jeune femme honnête et sans protecteurs, voilà les circonstances qui dans le roman expliquent, et excusent, les liaisons de l'héroine avec son "chevalier" Volx. On a pris l'habitude d'accepter comme faits authentiques les accusations contre Madame d'Epinay après la mort de Mme. de Jully; et le duel de Grimm en sa faveur: tout porte à croire cependant que ces incidents sont légendaires.

MS. de Brunet, vi. 24.—Voici ce que l'on lit dans le manuscrit au sujet du roman de René.

"Huit ou dix jours après le conbat de M. Volx il parut dans le public une espèce de petit roman, aussi agréablement que fortement écrit, sur les bruits publics et sur l'injustice des mauvaises réputations. L'auteur de ce livre était inconnu; cependant il ne pouvait être attaché qu'à peu de gens. Cet ouvrage fit une très grande sensation. Soit que le roman eut converti bien des gens, soit qu'on se lassât de parler de Mme. de Montbrillant, dès que ce livre parut on ne parla plus d'elle, que pour la plaindre, et ensuite pour faire son éloge. Desbarres crut avoir fait une combinaison indubitable en attribuant ce roman à Volx. Il s'était battu pour Madame de Montbrillant, il devait avoir écrire pour elle. Il eut beau protesté qu'il n'y avait aucun part, Desbarres, enchanté de sa découverte le débita par tout. Mais bientôt, René se déclara le véritable auteur; et l'amitié qu'il professa pour Madame de Montbrillant rendit tout à coup ses

vues et son ouvrage suspect, et détruisit par là une grande parti de son effet dans le public. Madame de Montbrillant lui témoigna la plus grande sensibilité sur le motif qui l'avait porté à écrire indirectement dans sa faveur. Mais je ne pus m'empêcher de dire à René, que j'étais étonné qu'ayant si bien réussi dans ses vues il se fut tant pressé de se déclarer. Il me repondit qu'il ne pouvait souffrir, ni qu'on lui donnât un ouvrage qui ne lui appartenait pas, ni qu'on attribuât les siens aux autres. 'Je ne me soucierais pas d'adopter le plus part de ceux qu'on me donne, et je ne crois pas les miens dignes de porter un autre nom.' Je me souviens que je dis alors à Madame de Montbrillant que je n'étais pas le dupe de cette modestie: et que je soupçonnais qu'avec beaucoup de talens il n'en pouvait souffrir à d'autres." [2]

L'éditeur des *Mémoires* imprimés, sachant qu'il ne se trouvait pas de roman parmi les écrits de Rousseau, "sur l'injustice des réputations," a cru devoir supprimer cette histoire.

Mém., ii. 122.—On lit dans les *Mémoires* à propos du duel de Grimm. "M. Grimm porta à son adversaire un coup qui lui effleura légèrement les côtes el il en reçut un en même temps dans le bras. Le Baron qui se crut fortement blessé dit qu'il était content. Alors M. Grimm jeta son épée, et aida son adversaire à étancher son sang avant de songer à lui-même. Le Comte de Friése ramena le Baron chez lui. *Heureusement leurs blessures ne sont point dangereuses.*

Cette dernière phrase est de l'Editeur Brunet.

Dans le MS. on reconnait l'altération faite et que d'après le roman, le chevalier "Volx" fut au contraire gravement blessé.[3] "On craint," écrit M. de Montbrillant, "que M. Volx n'ait le bras estropié, le point de

[1] C'est le tuteur qui parle.

[2] Voir note de l'Arsenal cité p. 386. MS. des Archives, cahier 115, où l'histoire de René est inserée.

[3] *MS. de Brunet* vi. 238, aussi MS. des Archives.

l'épée ayant offensé un nerf. La quantité de sang qu'il a perdu l'a fort affaibli. O mon ami ! pourrai-je jamais me consoler de cette aventure s'il faut qu'un honnête homme en soit toute sa vie le victime."

L'éditeur de 1818 a aussi supprimé la phrase suivante. "M. Volx et le Baron d'Elva auront besoin de tout le crédit du comte de Friése pour arrêter les suites que pourrait avoir leur combat."

On comprend que le motif de ces suppressions fut d'amoindrir l'importance de ce singulier duel, si peu dans les moeurs de l'époque, entre le secrétaire du comte de Friesen, et un Baron de sa société. On peut affirmer que si un tel combat aurait eu lieu les chroniqueurs de scandales mondains, Metra, Besenval, ou Collé, en auraient certainement parlé; *mais en dehors des Mémoires on n'a jamais rien su d'un duel de Grimm avec un calomniateur de Madame d'Epinay;* Mercier, le biographe de Grimm, écrivant en 1808 (*huit ans avant la mise en vente du manuscrit déposé avec Lecourt de Villière*) évidemment ne savait rien de ce pretendu duel.

Le manuscrit révèle que cette histoire est un "changement" fait dans le recit de Madame d'Epinay : une note dit de Volx "*il se bat chez le comte de G.*"[1] une seconde,[2] "*Donnez le nom de chevalier à Volx.*"

Une autre note nous apprend à douter de l'histoire des papiers de Mme. de Jully brûlés par Madame d'Epinay. Dans cette note on découvre que l'accusation faite contre l'héroine après la mort de la belle soeur aurait pu avoir un tout autre caractère.

"*Mme. de Ménil aura donné un diamant* à Volnex (chevalier de Vergennes) pour ses dettes—il part—elle meurt. Mme. de Montbrillant est soupçonné de l'avoir pris; les uns la défendent, les autres l'accusent; on se bat."

3. *MS. de Brunet,* vi. ; *MS. des Archives,* cahier 130.—Au sujet du propositions supposées faites à René

[1] Notes de l'Arsenal, 125. See p. 386. [2] *Ibid.*, 137.

par La République de Genève en 1756 avant son install ation par M. de Montbrillant aux Roches, on lit dan le MS.

" On lui propose *une chaire de Professeur en philoso phie.*"

Changement fait par Brunet.

Mém., ii. 228.—" On lui propose *une place de Biblio thécaire.*"

Le motif du changement est que dans les *Confession* (partie ii. liv. viii.) Rousseau dit : " Tronchin m'écrivi même *après son retour à Genève* pour me proposer l place de bibliothécaire *honoraire.*"

A propos de la Chaire de Philosophie offerte à René l'auteur ajoute :

MS. de Brunet, vi. ; *Archives*, cahier 130.—" Sain Urbain (*Gauffecourt*) dit qu'elles sont remplies par de hommes distingués et vraiment savants. A cet égar personne n'y convient mieux que René : *mais il est craindre qu'il ne se fasse professeur de sophisme et d misanthropie.*"

Mém., ii. 229.—L'éditeur supprime la dernière phras et par cette suppression on perd la preuve de la malveil lance qu'on attribue a l'héroine envers son protégé René

4. Les obligations supposées dues par Rousseau au Levasseurs.

Dans le roman Mme. de Montbrillant veut engage René à sacrifier son orgueil égoiste aux intérêts de deux " Elois."

MS. Brunet ; MS. des Archives, l. 130.—" J'ai tâch de persuader à René que ses principes, qui seraient trè estimables s'il était libre, devenaient très condamnable dans sa situation, puisqu'il ne pouvait pas se permettr d'exposer à la misère deux femmes *qui l'en avaien tiré* et qui avaient tout sacrifié pour lui. . . . J'ai pe gagné sur son esprit. Je suis donc esclave ? m'a-t-i répondu ; et parce qu'il a plu à deux femmes *que je n*

connaissais pas de me conserver ma vie dont je ne fais nul cas il faudrait que j'assujétisse mon sort."

Mém., ii. 235.—Comme l'Éditeur savait que l'on ne pouvait persuader aux lecteurs que Madame Levasseur et Thérèse avaient tiré Rousseau de la misère, ou lui avait conservé la vie, il a rayé ces phrases.

5. Lettre de René qui est tenu n'avoir jamais vu la petite maison qu'on lui donnait à Montmorency.

MS. de Brunet ; MS. des Archives.—"Si votre santé vous le permet je vous proposerais me mener dimanche aux Roches, pour reconnaître les lieux."

Mém., 240.—Brunet qui savait que Rousseau n'avait pas besoin *de reconnaître les lieux*, puisque la retraite qu'on lui donnait, il l'avait choisie, a rayé cette phrase.

6. (Après l'établissement de René aux Roches l'éditeur à insérè dans le MS. 7 lettres de Rousseau qui n'appartenaient pas à l'ouvrage ; on trouve ces lettres en face des pages 8 et 9, vol. vii. du MS. de la Bibliothèque de la ville.)

7. Les "occupations" de René.

Quand elle a établi son protégé aux Roches, Mme. de Montbrillant lui demande qu'elles seraient ses occupations ?

MS. Brunet, vii. 9 ; *MS. des Archives*, cahier 131. —Il me dit qu'il comptait se remettre *à dessiner et à peindre à gouache*, si l'on me fache, disait il, *j'irai jusqu'à peindre les dessus de porte en camayeux.*

L'éditeur, qui veut donner a René les occupations de Rousseau, fait ce changement.

Mém., ii. 254.—Il me dit qu'il comptait se remettre *à copier la musique.*

C'est le même changement quelques pages plus loin quand Mme. de Montbrillant raconte la "plaisanterie" de Volx au sujet du métier de René.

MS. Brunet ; MS. des Archives ; Mém., vol. ii. p. 260. —Il s'est élevé hier à la promenade une discussion entre Volx et René qui n'était au fond qu'une plaisanterie. René

a en l'air de s'y préter de bonne grace ; mais il souffrait intérieurement ou je suis bien trompée. Il avait rapporté à Mme. de Montbrillant *quelques papiers d'éventails et quelques écrans* (les copies qu'il avait faites pour lui) [1] celui-ci lui demanda s'il était homme *à entreprendre quelques dessus de portes en camayeux* (a lui en livrer autant en quinze jours).[1] Il répondit peut-être que oui, peut-être que non, c'est suivant la disposition, l'humeur, et la santé. En ce cas, dit M. de Montbrillant, je ne vous donnerai que six à faire parce qu'il me faut la certitude de les avoir. Eh bien, reprit René, vous aurez la satisfaction d'en avoir six qui déparéront les six autres. Voyez vous, reprit Volx en riant, cette pretention de peintre (de copiste) [2] qui le saisit déja. Si vous disiez qu'il ne manque pas une virgule à vos écrits tout le monde serait d'accord, mais je parie qu'il y a bien quelques feuilles ou quelques queus de travers dans vos écrans (quelques notes de transposées dans vos copies).

8. *La "générosité" de Volx et de Garnier.*

Mme. de Montbrillant a déjà signalé la genérosité de Volx et Garnier en ce que n'ayant guère le nécessaire ils font néanmoins une pension à la vieille Eloi à l'insu de René. Elle ajoute.

MS. Brunet, vii. 16 ; *MS. des Archives*, cahier 131.—"A peu près vers le même temps M. Volx se trouva obligé par un arrangement de famille à sacrifier pour une année le peu de revenue que son patrimoine lui procurait. M. Garnier se chargea pour cette année de la pension entière qu'ils payaient à eux deux à Madame Eloi à l'insu de René, ce qui le forca à une plus grande économie et à faire des voyages de Paris aux Roches à pied. Madame de Montbrillant qui le sut, prit souvent prétexte d'avoir à envoyer sa voiture à Paris ou à la faire revenir à Montbrillant afin que Garnier peut en profiter sans lui en avoir obligation."

Mém., ii. 263.—L'éditeur a senti que cette pension

[1] Changement de l'Ed. [2] Changement par Brunet.

supposée avoir été faite à Madame Levasseur par Grimm et Diderot, "à l'insu de Rousseau" paraîtrait, si non incroyable, très suspecte à l'égard du motif qui aurait inspiré une generosité si déplacée envers une vieille femme *qui recevait déjà des mains de Rousseau et de Madame d'Epinay plus que le nécessaire ;* le passage a éte rayé.

9. Le refus de Rousseau à déménager de l'Ermitage l'hiver.

D'après le recit des *Mémoires,* René n'etait guère établi aux Roches, que Volx ne commença ses représentations à Madame de Montbrillant sur les inconvénients qu'il y aurait a lui laisser passer l'hiver dans sa retraite. On doit reconnaître que Rousseau avait bien à se plaindre de cette inconstance qui lui faisait bâtir une demeure, pour vouloir l'en chasser quelques mois après.

MS. Brunet, vii. ; *MS. des Archives,* 132.—"Depuis deux jours que René est ici, nous n'avons cessé de le détourner de passer l'hiver aux Roches. Il en a d'abord plaisanté ; ensuite il s'est fâché. Hier il nous a écoutés en silence ; et il a fini par me dire qu'il nous donnerait aujourd'hui sa réponse. Ce matin il est parti avant que personne ne fût levé et il m' a écrit en arrivant chez lui.

"*Lettre de René.*—Je commence par vous dire que je suis résolu, déterminé, quoiqu'il arrive à passer l'hiver aux Roches ; que rien ne me fera changer de résolution ; et que vous n'en avez pas le droit vous-même, parce que telles ont été nos conventions quand je suis venu, ainsi n'en parlons plus que pour vous dire en deux mots mes raisons. Il m'est essentiel d'avoir du loisir et de la tranquillité pour *achever cet hiver mon grand ouvrage ; il s'agit peut-être de* 2,000 *écus de profit, songez vous à cela," etc.*

Mem., ix. 269.—L'éditeur transforme cette dernière phrase. *Il est essentiel d'avoir du loisir, de la tranquillité, et toutes mes commodités pour travailler cet hiver : it s'agit en cela de tout pour moi.*

Le changement peut avoir été fait non seulement parce que c'eût été difficile de faire croire aux lecteurs que Rousseau aurait écrit la phrase sur les "2,000 écus de profit," mais aussi très probablement parce que l'éditeur possédait la véritable lettre de Rousseau. Cependant, l'éditeur s'etant engagé auprès de ses lecteurs que dans les *Mémoires* il ne publiait rien que Madame d'Epinay n'eût écrit, manquait à sa parole quand il y insera *sans avertir ses lecteurs* des véritables lettres de Rousseau qui ne faisaient pas parti de l'ouvrage; c'était là commettre la faute précisement que nous lui avons reprochées: *attribuer à l'ouvrage une authenticité qu'il n'a pas. . .*

10. La Mort de Saint Urbain.

MS. de Brunet, vii. 75.—D'après le roman, Saint Urbain (de Gauffecourt) meurt au mois d'Avril 1757, le jour après le départ de Volx pour la guerre.

"*M. de saint Urbain mourut le lendemain.* On cacha sa mort à Mme. de Montbrillant pendant vingt-quatre heures. Il fallut enfin la lui apprendre," etc. L'éditeur Brunet savait que Gauffecourt n'est pas mort en 1757. Que Rousseau était en correspondance avec lui en 1765, du temps des persécutions qui forcèrent Rousseau de quitter Motiers. Donc il substitua au recit du roman cette remarque qu'il attribue à l'héroine;

Mém., ii. 314.—"*Graces au ciel les médecins ont déclaré que notre cher Gauffecourt était tout à fait hors de danger.* Pour moi je crains bien qu'il ne se ressente de cette attaque le reste de ses jours: au moins nous le conserverons."

11. Tronchin et Madame d'Epinay.

Le motif allégué pour la visite de Madame d'Epinay à Genève était qu'elle désirait consulter Tronchin. Rousseau avait présenté Tronchin à Madame d'Epinay en 1756 (*Conf.*, Part ii. liv.) mais comme on ne voulut pas lui laisser cet honneur, on prétendit que ce furent les con-

seils de M. de Jully et de Grimm qui la décida a faire le voyage à Genève en 1758 et qu'elle ne connaissait *pas Tronchin.* L'Editeur Brunet qui savait que l'amitié de Madame d'Epinay avec Tronchin était un fait établi par leurs lettres, a cru devoir transformer ou supprimer ces passages.

MS. de l'Arsenal, cahier 142 (new); *MS. de Brunet* vii.; *Mem.*, iii., 93; Mme. de M. à Volx.—"J'ai reçu aussi des nouvelles de M. de Ménil, il est dans l'enthousiasme de Genève et des Genevois; *il porte son enthousiasme jusqu'à me persecuter de nouveau pour consulter M. Tronchin qui est selon lui aux miracles. Il prétend qu'on vient de tous les pays rechercher son avis. Enfin c'est un dieu. J'ai tant vu de ces réputations lointaines s'évanouir quand on les approche.*"—Rayé par l'éditeur.

Réponse de Volx. Je ne suis point étonné que M. de Ménil soit enthousiaste pour M. Tronchin, je me joindrai à lui en temps et lieu pour vous engager à le consulter; *je le connais un peu, assez même pour lui adresser votre lettre, mais il est cependant plus naturel de le faire passer par M. de Ménil.*—Rayé par l'éd.

Mme. de M. à Volx.—Je ne saurais prendre confiance dans un médecin qui est à cent lieues *et que je n'ai jamais vu.*

Je n'ai pas assez de confiance en Tronchin pour me déterminer jamais à aller le trouver.

Journal de M. de M.—"J'ai cédé enfin aux persécutions que m'ont faites ma mère et M. Volx pour que je voie Tronchin.

"J'ai reçu la réponse de M. Tronchin. Si elle ne me console pas beaucoup, elle me donne dans ses lumières et dans sa prudence plus de confiance que je n'en avais. Il y a certainement, dit il, une cause immédiate aux fréquens dérangemens de ma santé; mais quand même il prendrait sur lui de prononcer de si loin sur cette cause, *jamais il n'oserait entreprendre d'y remédier sans m'avoir sous les yeux.*"

On peut comparer avec cette affirmation une phrase dans *un vieux cahier* 158 de l'Arsenal, Mme. de Montbrillant écrivait à Volx les détails de la maladie qu'elle avait faite avant d'arriver à Genève elle dit : "*Je me rappelai que Costa* (*Tronchin*) *avait tenté déjà une fois de me détourner d'un voyage dont il paraissait redouter la fatigue.*" Cette phrase disparait du cahier neuf 150 qui remplace le cahier 158 sans doute parce que l'on avait remarqué l'indiscretion de cet aveu.

12. *La Femme de Chambre Dubuisson.*

On a accusé Rousseau d'avoir dit que le motif du voyage de Madame d'Epinay à Genève était de cacher une grossesse que ses rélations avec Grimm et le fait connu de sa séparation de son mari rendaient embarrassante. On ne doit que relire les *Confessions*, part ii. liv. ix. et la lettre de Rousseau à Grimm pour s'assurer que Rousseau ne dit rien qui aurait pu révéler quels étaient les faits dont se composait le "secret," qui "*n'en était un dans toute la maison de Madame d'Epinay que pour lui.*" Mais les défenseurs prétendus de Madame d'Epinay ont eu soin de mettre les points sur les i's ; Dans les *Mémoires* les affirmations sur l'état de la femme de chambre paraissent avoir pour motif la nécessité d'admettre qu'il y avait toujours *une voyageuse de la compagnie qui devait accoucher à Genève.* C'est sans doute pour cette raison que l'Editeur des *Mémoires* supprime toute mention de l'intéressante Femme de Chambre.

L'Arsenal cahier 145 ; note *Mém.* iii. ; *MS. de Brunet*, viii. p. iii. (rayé).—Mme. de M. à son Tuteur.—"J'ai quelque inquiétude sur l'état de ma femme de chambre. Je crains que la condition que j'ai mise au consentement de son mariage ne l'a engagé à me cacher une grossesse. Je lui en ai parlé : elle m'assure qu'elle n'est pas grosse. Dans ce cas elle est très malade. Dans l'un et l'autre cas elle peut me causer un grand embarras."

MS. de Brunet, viii. 5 ; cahier 145, rayé.—Le Tuteur

écrit, "Je parlai à sa femme de chambre comme elle l'avait désiré ; cette femme nous trompa, autant par attachement pour sa maîtresse que pour son interêt et nous assura qu'elle n'était pas grosse."

Vieux cahier de l'Arsenal, 166 ; *MS. de Brunet*, viii. 141, rayé.—Lettre de Mme. de M. à Volx, de Genève.—Mon dieu que ce Balbi (*Linant*) est insoutenable ! Il vient m'interrompre avec une scène qu'il avait bien voulu rendre touchante, mais elle n'était que ridicule ; comme je n'étais pas en train de rire elle ne m'a causé que l'impatience. Imaginez qu'il est entré dans ma chambre avec son air pathétique et mielleusement apprêtée conduisant la Dubuisson sur le poing qui avait l'air tremblante et déconcertée. . . . Mlle. Dubuisson, Balbi me dit, a une confidence à vous dire et jugeant par mon attachement et par mon zèle des égards que vous voulez bien avoir pour moi, elle a bien voulu que je l'accompagnasse. Et tout de suite voila une tirade sur mes vertus, mes bontés etc. accompagnée des larmes de Dubuisson. La fin de tout cela est qu'elle est grosse et que malgré tout ce que je lui ai dit avant mon départ pour m'en assurer, elle s'était acheminée de me tromper afin de me suivre—le tout par amour de moi comme vous pensez bien ! Si je ne la connaissais pas pour honnête femme je croirais Balbi le père de cet enfant par l'attendrissement que lui causait l'état de Dubuisson. *Mon premier mouvement était de la renvoyer, mais comment dans l'état où je suis prendre une inconnue ?*

"Toute reflexion faite je garde la Dubuisson, et je prends à ses frais une seconde femme de chambre que me donne une parente de M. Tronchin à qui je puis m'en rapporter. Je la prends dès à present afin qu'elle soit au fait de mon service lorsque Mlle. Dubuisson sera malade et ne pourra pas me servir."

(*Donc d'après le recit du roman Mlle. Dubuisson a du accoucher à Genève.*)—Que devient alors l'argument triomphal de MM. Perey et Maugras contre l'assertion attribuée à Rousseau (*qu'il n a pas faite*) que Madame

d'Epinay allait à Genève pour "cacher une grossesse et mettre au monde un enfant dont Grimm était le père? L'argument est" *les Archives de l'état civil de Genève, soigneusement examinés à trois reprises différentes, ne contiennent pas trace d'une naissance d'enfant étranger à cette époque.*[1]

(Mais, d'après le recit de Madame d'Epinay, Mlle. Dubuisson a du "mettre au monde un enfant à cette époque," et il ne faut pas oublier que ces auteurs "tiennent à affirmer" la véracité de ce recit.)

13. *Sur la Lettre de Diderot à Rousseau pour l'engager d'accompagner Madame d'Epinay à Genève.*

Dans les *Mémoires* cette lettre (sauve quelques petites différences de phrases), est essentiellement semblable à la lettre authentique des *Confessions*, copiée par Rousseau d'après la lettre autographe de Diderot, possédée par la Bibliothèque de Neuchatel.[2]—On va voir que s'il en est ainsi, c'est parce que l'Editeur a changé la lettre offensante de Garnier qui se trouve dans le manuscrit, pour tâcher de la donner le même ton que la lettre authentique.

MS. de l'Arsenal: Lettre de Garnier, cahier 145; *MS. de Brunet*, viii. 17.—"J'apprends" écrivait Garnier, "que Madame de Montbrillant part pour Genève et je n'entends pas dire que vous l'accompagnez. Ne voyez vous pas que si *elle a avec vous les torts que vous lui supposez* c'est la seule manière de vous acquitter de tout ce que vous lui devez et de pouvoir rompre ensuite décemment avec elle? Si vous n'en faites rien et que vous la laissez partir seule dans l'état où vous la voyez, *étant aussi mal intentionée qu'elle est pour vous* elle vous fera un tort dont vous ne vous laverez jamais. *Vous ne cessez de dire que vous voulez retourner dans votre pays. Que peut donc vous retenir, à moins qu'il n'y ait un mot de vrai à tout ce que vous m'avez dit.*"—(cette phrase est rayée par l'Editeur, qui ajoute :—)

[1] Preface, p. xxii, *Jeunesse de Mme. d'Epinay.*

[2] Publiée par M. Streckeisen-Moultou dans *J. J. Rousseau, ses Amis et ses Ennemis.*

"Et puis ne craignez vous point qu'on interpréte mal votre conduite et qu'on ne vous soupçonne ou d'ingratitude ou d'autres motifs. Je sais bien que vous aurez toujours pour vous votre conscience mais cela suffit-il? Et est il permis de négliger le témoignage des autres hommes."—*Mém.*, iii. 117.

14. *La première réponse de Grimm à la lettre de Rousseau du* 29 *Oct.* 1757.

On connait pas les *Confessions* qu'avant d'ecrire à Rousseau la lettre "de sept à huit lignes" dont Rousseau dit; "c'etait une rupture mais dans des termes tels que la plus infernale haine peut les dicter;" Grimm avait répondu par une lettre énigmatique qui commençait, "*Le départ de Mme. d'Epinay est reculé. Son fils est malade, il faut attendre qu'il soit rétabli. Je rêverai à votre lettre, etc.,*" voir *Conf.*, part ii. liv. ix. Ce fut après la reception de cette lettre que Rousseau écrivit à Madame d'Epinay la lettre du 29 Oct. qui commence: "*J'apprends, Madame, que votre départ est différé et votre fils malade,*" etc. Mais dans le recit de Madame d'Epinay, l'auteur *supprime cette première réponse et fait apprendre à René par la Comtesse de Lange que le départ de Mme. de Montbrillant est différé. C'est ainsi que l'on veut expliquer l'assertion que Volx et Mme. de Montbrillant reçoivent le même jour* (jour du départ de Mme. de Montbrillant pour Genève) *leurs lettres de Rousseau.* Cette altération de dates, et surtout la suppression de la première réponse de Grimm, exerça les talents de l'Editeur des Mémoires qui veut rétablir l'exactitude historique.

Volx à Garnier.—Tenez, mon ami, lisez et apprenez enfin à connaître l'homme. Vous trouverez ci-joint une pièce d'éloquence que m'adressa René *le jour du départ de Madame de Montbrillant*, avant le départ de Mme. d'Epinay.[1] J'avais evité d'y repondre *directement* (ajouté) sentant bien que ce que j'avais à lui dire oc-

[1] MS. viii. (changement fait).

casionerait une rupture et un éclat; mais il m'y force aujourd'hui en me pressant de lui répondre: et avec un homme de ce caractère il ne faut pas tergiverser. Je me garderai bien de communiquer sa lettre à Mme. de Montbrillant; je craindrais dans l'état où elle est qu' une ingratitude aussi monstrueuse lui fit une trop forte impression; mais je ne lui cacherai pas qu'elle n'a plus rien à ménager avec un si grand fourbe. Je vous envoie aussi la copie de la *seconde* (ajouté) réponse qui je lui ai faite.

15. *La lettre de Rousseau à Madame d'Epinay du 29 Octobre.*

Elle fut écrite après qu'il avait reçu la première réponse de Grimm qui lui apprit que le départ de Madame d'Epinay était retardé. Pour expliquer comment René est venu à savoir ce delai, on lui fait écrire.

Arsenal et cahier 145; *MS. de Brunet.*—"La Comtesse de Lange qui m'apprends ce delai me parla beaucoup de ce voyage."[1]

"Madame d'Houdetot me parla beaucoup de ce voyage."

16. *La maladie que fait Madame d'Epinay en route pour Genève.*

L'Arsenal cahier 148; *MS. de Brunet*, viii.—L'Editeur, craignant que cet accident pourrait faire croire à une fausse couche, a soin de supprimer cet incident: sur lequel Mme. de Montbrillant revient plus tard dans une longue description (cahier 160 vieux, 153 neuf), où elle raconte à Volx son état d'âme, aussi bien que ses souffrances physiques. Dans la description faite au cahier neuf 153, on constate un changement du récit donnée dans le vieux cahier 160, où probablement nous avons les vrais sentiments de Madame d'Epinay, qui n'était pas aussi "philosophe" en réligion que Grimm le voulait.

Vieux cahier 160.

[1] Changement fait, *Mém.*, iii. 124.

Sur sa foi en Dieu, vieux cahier 160, Madame d'Epinay dit : "Quant à la Création de l'Univers, je crois qu'il faut reconnaître un Auteur et je Le reconnais."

Cahier neuf 153 et *MS. de Brunet.*—"Quant à la création je serais portée à croire qu'il y faut un Auteur mais je n'en suis pas très sure : s'il y en a un je suis très persuadée que nous ne pouvons rien avoir à démêler ensemble."

(C'est ainsi aussi que dans le cahier 151 et dans le *MS. de Brunet* elle raconte que Balbi avait envoyé chercher un prêtre, mais qu'elle sut échapper aux sacraments.)

151. "Ce prêtre arriva ivre-mort : ce qui me mit fort à mon aise. Je lui parlai en conséquence de son état. Il eut l'effronterie de m'exhorter à recevoir les sacraments et je lui représenta que vomissant sans cesse je ne le pouvais."

(Cependant dans le vieux cahier 157 elle dit, en parlant de son arrivée a Genève après cet accident.)

". . . J'oubliais de vous dire que M. de Voltaire est venu au devant de nous. Il voulait nous retenir à dîner, mais quoique je fus assez bien je m'y suis refusée *trouvant une sorte de ridicule à dîner chez Voltaire cinquante heures après avoir été administrée.*"

17. *La réponse de Madame d'Epinay à sa lettre du 29 Octobre.*

C'est la réponse dont Rousseau parle dans les *Confessions,* elle est parmi les autographes conservés à Neuchatel et imprimés par M. Streckeisen-Moultou ; dans cette lettre Mdme. d'Epinay *dit n'avoir reçu celle de Rousseau qu'à son arrivée à Genève le 9 Novembre.* Dans le roman Mme. de Montbrillant reçoit la lettre de René *le jour de son départ,* et elle l'envoit à Volx en lui disant qu'elle *n'a pas répondu et qu'elle n'y répondra pas.* Effectivement dans les Manuscrits on ne trouve nulle mention de cette lettre ; et la lettre de Rousseau ("*si l'on mourrait de douleur,*" etc.) est tenue avoir été écrite par René sans provocation reçue de sa "bien-

faitrice." Plus tard la lettre de Madame d'Epinay du 17 Janvier en réponse à la lettre du 17 Décembre, est aussi omise du roman: et il est probable que Madame d'Epinay a écrit cette lettre à l'insu de Grimm.

MS. de Brunet, viii. 47 ; *MS. Arsenal*, cahier 149.—L'editeur du manuscrit a travaillé à rectifier tout cela. Ainsi dans le manuscrit on lit dans la première lettre de Mme. de Montbrillant à Volx après son arrivée à Genève. "J'ai trouvé ici une lettre de mon concierge qui me marque que René lui fait dire de venir reprendre les meubles des Roches parce qu'il va en sorter. Je lui réponds tout simplement: si M. René quitte les Roches retirez en les meubles le lendemain qu'il en sera sorti et pas avant. Vous verrez M. Volx, vous saurez de lui ce que deviennent les dames Eloi et si elles ont besoin, de quelques uns de mes effets vous leur laisserez ce que M. Volx vous dira de leur donner. Vous porterez le surplus chez ma mère. *En effet, mon ami, René ne m'a pas écrit et ne m'a rien fait dire.*"—Rayé dans le MS.

Sur la lettre où René informe Mme. de Montbrillant dans les mots de Rousseau que "rien n'est si simple ni si nécessaire que de sortir de sa maison du moment qu'elle n'approuve pas qu'il y reste" Mme. Montbrillant écrit a Volx:—

MS. de Brunet, viii. 75 ; *Arsenal* cahier 153 *neuf*, 161 *vieux*.—" J'ai reçu une lettre de René en réponse à ma dernière lettre, *comme elle n'en exige pas, je ne répliquerai point.*" L'editeur a collé un morceau de papier audessus du passage où se trouve écrit "*je vous l'envoie avec la réponse que j'ai faite tout de suite*"—et il insére la lettre de Mme. d'Epinay du 17 Janvier.[1]

Dans la confusion qui resulte des changements faits soit par Madame d'Epinay elle-même soit par ses différents éditeurs dans l'histoire il est utile d'etablir l'ordre des Lettres véritables.[2]

[1] *Mem.*, iii. 184, 185.

[2] Dans une étude d'une grande valeur par Professeur Ritter intitulée *Nouvelles Recherches sur les Confessions* 1880 se trouve un tableau

1. 24 ou 25 Oct. Lettre de Rousseau à Grimm (Dites moi Grimm).

2.* 27 ou 28 Oct. 1e réponse de Grimm. (Le départ de Mme. d'E. est reculé.)

3. 29 Oct. Lettre de Rousseau à Mme. d'Epinay. (J'apprends Madame.)

4. 8 Nov. 2e réponse de Grimm (une rupture mais dans les termes que la plus infernale haine peut les dicter).

5.* Réponse de Mme. d'Epinay reçu 16 Nov. (Je n'ai reçu votre lettre du 29 qu'à mon arrivée ici c'est à dire le 9.)

6. Réponse de Rousseau à Mme. d'Ep. 23 Nov. (Si l'on mourrait de douleur je ne serais pas en vie.)

7. Réponse de Mme. d'Epinay 10 Décembre (lettre de congé).

8. Réponse de Rousseau 17 Décembre. (Rien n'est si simple.)

9.* Réponse de Mme. d'Epinay 17 January. (Je n'ai reçu votre lettre du 17 Décembre que hier.)

10. Dernière lettre de Rousseau Fev. (Je vois Madame que mes lettres ont toujours le malheur de vous arriver fort tard.)

De ces lettres le 2*, 5*, et 9* sont *supprimées* dans l'histoire de René, le 1e et 3e sont supposées avoir été *reçues par Grimm et Madame d'Epinay le même jour* et les lettres de reproches 6e *et* 10e sont supposées être, non des réponses à des lettres reçues, mais *des injures adressées par Rousseau à Madame d'Epinay* sans aucune provocation reçue.

[18. *L'éditeur fait terminer l'ouvrage après une lettre de l'héroine à "Madame de H."*—Dans le manuscrit la lettre est à "Madame Mellot" la femme du Génévois avec qui Volx doit avoir plus tard une correspondance confidentielle qui fut la cause des soupçons

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chronologique des principales lettres échangées par Rousseau, Madame d'Houdetot, Grimm, Saint-Lambert, Diderot et Madame d'Epinay depuis le 26 Oct. jusqu'au 17 Janvier. C'est Prof. Ritter qui le premier a essayé de présenter ses lettres dans leur vraie ordre.

éveillés contre lui d'être un espion. Cette lettre se trouve page 136 du 9e tome, qui a 358 pages; en face de la page 136 est collée une feuille de papier bleu, sur lequel est écrit la note suivante, qui termine les *Mémoires;* dans l'édition de Brunet.]

Ici finissent les Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay.[1]

"Il parait qu'elle était revenue de Genève sans avoir trouvé auprès de Tronchin le remède qu'elle était allée chercher à des maux auxquels des retours d'anciens symptomes firent juger qu'il y avait malheureusement peu d'espoir de guérison.

"Quoique la vie d'une personne souvent malade, et sortant rarement de chez elle, doive offrir peu d'intérêt, et que Madame d'Epinay ait passé les vingt dernières années de la sienne seulement au milieu d'un petit nombre d'amis, nous regrettons qu'elle ne nous ait pas laissé le tableau d'une existence sur laquelle cependant elle avait su répandre plus d'une sorte d'agrément. Nous l'eussions vue tantôt achevant l'éducation de ses enfants, les établissant honorablement et composant pour sa petite fille un des meilleurs traités de morale à l'usage de l'enfance qui existent, ou bien prenant la plume de Grimm, continuer en son absence la *Correspondance Littéraire* qu'il entretenait avec plusieurs princes de l'Allemagne. Elle nous êut encore entretenus de cette *parfaite* Madame d'Houdetot, de Saint-Lambert, du Baron d'Holbach,[2] du Marquis de Croismare à qui le surnom de *bon* convenait peut-être encore mieux que celui de *charmant* qu'on lui avait donné dans la société. Mais avec quel plaisir surtout ne nous serions nous pas vus admis à ces conversations dans lesquelles brillaient tour à tour la chaleur du Diderot, l'esprit de l'Abbé Galiani et l'urbanité de Saint-Lambert.[3] Le talent avec lequel

[1] Note de l'Editeur.

[2] Elle le fait: en peignant ces personnages comme de faux amis qui abandonnent l'héroine quand elle perd sa fortune.

[3] Garnier le prototype de Diderot a beaucoup de conversations avec Mme. de Montbrillant et écrit sur elle de longues lettres au tuteur M. de Lisieux.

Madame d'Epinay a rendu dans ses *Mémoires* plusieurs dialogues charmans, doit nous faire regretter qu'elle n'ait pas cherché l'occasion de le réproduire plus souvent. Diderot était trop ami de Grimm pour ne pas devenir à la fin celui d'une femme qu'il n'avait jugée longtemps que d'après des préventions suggérées plutôt à son esprit qu'à son cœur. Il faut croire qu'il reconnut son tort et qu'il chercha autant qu'il fut en lui de réparer, car la liaison qui s'établit entre eux ne finit qu'à la mort de Madame d'Epinay, arrivée le 17 Avril 1783. Grimm qui conserva toujours pour Madame d'Epinay le plus tendre attachement, a consacré à sa mémoire quelques pages de sa *Correspondance Littéraire.* Or comme il nous serait impossible, faute de nouveaux renseignemens de dire autre chose et surtout de le dire mieux que lui, nous renvoyons le lecteur à la troisième partie de cet ouvrage." [1]

Dans l'Introduction à *La Jeunesse de Madame d'Épinay* xxvii., les auteurs écrivent : On a reproché à Madame d'Epinay le cynicisme des aveux qu'ils contiennent sur elle et les siens. Nous n'avons qu'une chose à répondre : *ils* (*les Mémoires*) *n'étaient pas destinés à la publicité . . . elle ne les a lus qu'à un petit cercle d'amis ; sa lettre à Sédaine en fait foi. . .* (Après avoir cité la lettre à Sédaine, écrite par Madame d'Epinay à propos des petits volumes qu'elle fit imprimer à Genève, ces écrivains continuent :—)

[1] L'édition de la *Correspondance Littéraire* à laquelle l'Editeur renvoit ses lecteurs est celle de 1814 donnée chez Colburn, Londres, le même libraire Anglais dont on trouve le nom en titre (avec celui de Brunet à Paris, à la première page des "*Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay.*" Cette première édition de la correspondance, assez rare, mais que j'ai eu le bonheur de ramasser à Londres, est en sept volumes,—les quatres volumes de 1770 à 1790 ayant été publiés avant les trois volumes de 1753 à 1769. D'après l'annonce en titre de l'ouvrage, l'édition est faite d'après la correspondance adressée au Duc de Saxe Gotha ; elle est presqu' identique avec l'édition publiée par M. Maurice Tourneux, *en ce qui regarde La Correspondance Littéraire,* il manque nécessairement à cette édition beaucoup de lettres personnelles et surtout les notes du savant Editeur de Grimm et de Diderot).

"S'il était besoin d'un nouveau témoignage nous le trouverions dans la page suivante *entièrement écrite de sa main* (Note, p. 10) et qui existe dans une liasse de ses papiers inédits que nous avons dépouillée."

Les italiques qui accentuent l'affirmation que la page citée est entièrement écrite de la main de Madame d'Epinay sont de MM. Perey et Maugras. Cependant la page qui se trouve parmi les feuilles détachées du *MS. de l'Arsenal* n'est *pas écrite par Madame d'Epinay mais par le copiste dont on voit l'écriture dans les facsimiles des vieux cahiers des Archives.*[1] Mais ce n'est pas ici la seule preuve du peu d'exactitude mise par ces auteurs dans leur travail de critique ; en citant le passage ils s'arrêtent avant la dernière phrase, qui prouve que cet écrit appartient à une époque *antérieure à sa rupture avec Rousseau* et *à la querelle avec Duclos ;* donc que ses affirmations sur les motifs de son travail en 1756 ne décident rien par rapport à la question après 1770 quand l'ouvrage récrit et corrigé avec l'assistance de Grimm et Diderot était destiné à la publicité. La phrase supprimée par ces auteurs est à la fin de la citation donner ci-dessous.

ARSENAL MS.

Page détachée. No 74. écriture du copiste. (No. 1.)

CAHIER TROUVÉ DANS LES PAPIERS DE MDME. DE MONTBRILLANT

"Ma santé s'altére de jour en jour, et ne me laisse que peu d'espérance de parvenir à la rétablir. Je me sens affaiblie et je crains que la mort ne me surprend plutôt qu'on ne croit, et que je le voudrais à présent que je suis heureuse. Je me dois, et je dois à ceux qui m'honorent encore de leur estime et de leur tendresse,

[1] Handwriting, No. 1.

de leur laisser les moyens de détruire après moi la calomnie, par le récit le plus sincère de différents évènements dans lesquels j'ai eu presque toujours les apparences contre moi. La timidité, la honte, et quelquefois l'honnêteté et l'indulgence pour les autres, m'ont imposé silence, et m'ont porté à me laisser condamner sans me plaindre. C'est à vous surtout, ô mon tuteur! que je veux paraître telle que je suis, et aux yeux de qui il m'importe à me justifier. Si je vous ai caché ma tendresse pour M. Volx c'est que j'ai craint votre censure, et que vous ne jugiez mal d'une femme de 28 ans, qui après avoir essayé deux fois tous les malheurs attachés à une passion malheureuse, se laissait séduire de nouveau par l'espoir de trouver à la fin un cœur digne de toute sa tendresse. Je l'ai trouvé enfin le bonheur qui jusqu'à présent m'avait fuit, mais quel effort il fallait faire sur moi même pour y réussir. Mais sans autre préambule lisez ces lettres que j'ai soigneusement gardées. Quelques mots de liaison vous instruiront de ce qui n'est pas assez clairement expliqué. Si je reviens de l'état où je suis, je continuerai chaque jour de même jusqu'à ce qu'il plaise à ma destinée de prendre fin, ce qui pourrait bien n'être pas long. Comme tout ce qui vient de mes amis m'est cher, j'ai conservé également leurs lettres et je les ai placées à leurs dates. . . . *bon! voila Desbarres qui revient me voir*,—ô, cet homme est odieux! Bonjour, cher Tuteur, venez demain dîner avec moi, vous y trouverez *St. Urbain, René, et M. Volx. René peut-être nous lira quelque chose.*"

NOTE E

THE LEGEND OF ROUSSEAU'S CHILDREN.—

(See Vol. i. p. 140–181.)

A critic who claims respectful attention from all students of Rousseau—Professor Ritter of Geneva—has made some objections to the evidence put forward

in my study, in connection with the negative proofs afforded by the registers of the Enfants Trouvés, that no infant was ever received there, having in its clothing the marked card prepared by Rousseau for the identification of his eldest child. My argument was based upon my personal examination of these eighteenth century registers, still preserved at the Hospice des Enfants Assistés, Rue de Lénfert Rochereau, Paris. These registers afford evidence of the scrupulous care taken to notify in the *procès-verbal* that, by obligation, had to record the reception of every child, the most exact and minute description of any token or mark found upon the child, or in its clothing, which might help to identity it if it were reclaimed. I maintained, and I still maintain, that in 1761, La Roche, supplied with the duplicate of the marked card, and well instructed by Rousseau, could not have failed to find in these registers the record he was in search of, if the record were really there; that is to say, if this infant had ever been deposited at the Enfants Trouvés in the way Rousseau supposed and has described in the *Confessions.* Professor Ritter's objection is that in my study (as it was published in 1895) I made the date of the supposed birth of Rousseau's first child the last months of 1747 or the first of 1748, following in this the *Confessions;* whereas in Rousseau's letter of the 12th June 1761 to the Duchess of Luxembourg asking her to help him in his efforts to reclaim the child, he gives the date as between 1746 and 1747: and that we have the evidence of a letter to Madame de Warens, proving that Rousseau had paid a visit to Chenonceau in 1746. Accepting gratefully Professor Ritter's correction upon this question of dates, I would wish to point out that my argument remains entirely unaffected by it; for it is not based upon my own examination of the special records of children received in 1747 or 1748, but upon my personal testimony (after examination) of the careful keeping of these

records; and consequently of the certitude that La Roche, well instructed by Rousseau as to what he had to look for, and the months where he had to look for it, could not have failed to find the notification of the reception of this child, if it had ever been received. Nevertheless, as Professor Ritter still insisted upon his view that to establish my case I ought to examine the registers belonging to the last months of 1746 and the early months of 1747, I resolved to undertake this inquiry; although I felt it was foredoomed to be fruitless in its results—and for evident reasons:—for if even we accept the story told in the *Confessions* not merely as a true account of what Rousseau believed, but as a true account of what actually happened, we can hardly think that Madame Gouin would have, when depositing the child at the Enfants Trouvés, given the correct name of the parents. So that we have no clue in this direction. Nor do we possess, *as La Roche did*, the double of the marked card prepared by Rousseau; consequently, a researcher who explores these *procès-verbaux* to-day can hardly expect to make any useful discovery, because he does not know what he is looking for! Nevertheless, I have to thank Professor Ritter's different opinion upon this point for what may be described as a discovery, although it does not throw any fresh light upon the facts as they were stated by me in 1895, but that does afford me an opportunity of preventing the possible introduction of a new fable based upon unsound foundations. The discovery is *that there does exist in these registers an entry that might very readily be accepted by a careless investigator as the very one we are in search of!*

Number 2975, in the register for the year 1746, month November, refers the researcher to a *procès-verbal* signalized by the same number, and dated 21st November, which records the reception of "un enfant du sexe masculin," certified as having been baptized at the Hôtel Dieu on the 20th November, under the name

of *Joseph Catherine Rousseau.* The signature of the person who deposited Joseph Catherine is very indistinct; but above the original signature is written *Veriseau.*

Now, although Rousseau is a very common French name, and although it seems, as has been said, extremely improbable that in a case like this the real name would have been given, the coincidence of dates between this entry and the supposed birth of Thérèse's first child might lend some colour to the supposition that one really had found the true entry. But even as a supposition this theory cannot be entertained, for the irrefutable objection is *that La Roche must have seen this entry in* 1761, *that he knew from Rousseau under what name the child was supposed to have been registered, that he held in his hands the duplicate of the token prepared for its identification, and that Joseph Catherine Rousseau, baptized at the Hôtel Dieu on the* 20*th November, evidently did not answer to the description of the child he was attempting to trace.*

In the face of these facts, it should be affirmed and recognized that the modest claims of Joseph Catherine Rousseau to sleep undisturbed in the registers of the Enfants Trouvés ought to be respected. And for myself, I claim, as his first and original discoverer, a right to protest against any fresh discovery of him; or any attempt to introduce him to modern times as the newly-found eldest son of Jean Jacques, and Thérèse Levasseur.

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Macdonald, *Mrs.* Frederika (Richardson)

Jean Jacques Rousseau, a new criticism, by Frederi
Macdonald ... London, Chapman and Hall, ltd., 1906.

2 v. fronts., 5 pl., 6 port., 9 facsim. 22cm.

1. Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 1712–1778.

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